SCRIBNER'S MAGAZINE

VOL. XCIII, NO. 1 JANUARY, 1933

Roosevelt's Pilots —

COLONEL HOUSE AND COLONEL HOWE

By Arthur D. Howden Smith

FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT enters upon the duties of the Presidency with several advantages which were not enjoyed by either of his Democratic predecessors in the White House since the Civil War. An impressive popular mandate, non-sectional, even non-partisan, in character; no commitments to any faction; complete control of Congress—these three elements of strength are his to an unprecedented degree. But of perhaps equal importance, certainly of equal importance in a human sense, is the fact that he is provided with two intimate advisers who share alike an utterly unselfish devotion to his interests. They are his political secretary, Colonel Louis McHenry Howe, and Colonel E. M. House, whose emergence from twelve years of retirement to counsel Governor Roosevelt was one of the most dramatic incidents in recent political history, all the more dramatic because it was not widely known, and indeed, if Colonel House had had his way, wouldn't have been known at all.

Aside from a considerable difference in age, backgrounds and temperament, there are some striking points of similarity between Colonel Howe and Colonel House. Obviously, they are both colonels, and what might be called reluctant colonels. The titles were unsolicited, Colonel House's having been wished upon him by the late Governor Hogg, of Texas, Colonel Howe's by that splendid lion of the Bluegrass, the Honorable Ruby Laffoon—there is a constant temptation to mispronounce the first syllable—with the idea that it was an essential part of the equipment of any intimate adviser to any President. And maybe that's true. Another more striking similarity between the two colonels is that neither of them desires office or preferment. Likewise they are as one in preferring to work as quietly and anonymously as possible. And they possess in common an extraordinary astuteness in estimating and ordering the devious processes of politics.

On the other hand, Colonel Howe is a product of a later political generation than Colonel House, who is in his middle seventies, and by that very circumstance has not as yet had the opportunity to acquire a store of experience such as is possessed by the man who elected four governors of Texas for two terms each, and then, hungering for a wider field, manœuvred Woodrow Wilson into the White House and kept him there for eight years. Moreover, Colonel House is fond of people —as is Franklin Roosevelt—and meets easily men and women of all persuasions, while Colonel Howe (like Woodrow Wilson) finds difficulty in being at ease with any except his immediate friends. Where House is suave, cordial, a fluent talker, Howe is shy, brusque, diffident, stiff in manner—so much so that he managed to offend numerous men who thought, justly or unjustly, that they had a claim upon his time and attention during the campaign. In all fairness, it should be added that this trait doesn't seem to have harmed Roosevelt's interests, very likely because of Roosevelt's hearty humanness in all personal contacts, which has enabled him to assuage any irritations Colonel Howe might have caused. In fact, some of the new President's

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

admirers are of the opinion that his most dangerous weakness is this very tendency to expansiveness with people, which his secretary's attitude works to counteract. Certainly, it was a tendency which made Warren G. Harding a popular minor politician and carried him to the Senate, but was of incalculable harm to him in the White House.

HOWE—A "ONE-MAN" EXPERT

Howe grew up in New York State politics. He was a newspaper correspondent in Albany when Franklin D. Roosevelt was serving his first term in the State Senate, and conceived a violent and fanatical admiration for the scion of a great name, who showed what was in him by organizing a resistance to Tammany which denied "Blue-eyed Billy" Sheehan's ambition to go to the United States Senate. As Roosevelt fought his way upward, Louis Howe was there beside him, quiet, loyal, unselfish, always devoted. Politics to Howe was one man. He wasn't interested in other candidates. He never paid much attention to issues or causes with which Roosevelt wasn't concerned. But the moment any matter became of consequence to Roosevelt's fortunes, Howe threw himself at the problem of using it for that purpose with a ferocious energy which made up for any lack of previous knowledge or interest. For instance, nobody considered him of any account in national politics until he showed his stuff in the last campaign. The Albany newspaper men, who, as a rule, don't like him, but appreciate his powers of intensive application, used to say: "Well, boys, it looks like Roosevelt and Howe, all right." They meant it, too. Howe is as much a part of the Roosevelt mythos as the successful candidate, himself. He is a member of the Roosevelt household, and is held in affection by the President's mother, wife, and children.

Colonel House, too, has known Franklin Roosevelt since young manhood; but what is more, he has known the President's mother a much longer time. It was Mrs. Roosevelt, senior, in fact, who persuaded him to lend his canny brain to her son's cause after the Governor's re-election in 1930. House, whose predilection for secrecy leads him occasionally to believe he can hide like an ostrich by sticking his head in the sand, consented when approached by the Governor himself, but made the stipulation that no one, not even the Governor's wife, was to be told of the arrangement. A ridiculous idea, of course. It is impossible for a man as prominent as House to become the intimate adviser of the Presidential candidate of a great party and not have it leak out. Very shortly afterward an official of one of the larger banks came to me with a letter of introduction. "Tell me," he said after some preliminary conversation, "is it true that Colonel House is advising Roosevelt?" "Yes," I told him. "Why do you ask?" "Because," he answered, "there are many of us in Wall Street who will feel safer about the Governor, if that's true."

I used the phrase "intimate adviser" above. It may be challenged by many. On election night Roosevelt publicly thanked his two friends, Jim Farley, chairman of the Democratic National Committee, and Louis Howe, who, he said, had done more to bring about his victory than any others. That was the literal truth. They had done the drudgery, they had been out in the crossfire of the battle—Farley more than Howe; but the basic ideas of the Roosevelt strategy were, in the main, formulated by House. The pre-convention campaign for the nomination was an adaptation of House's strategy in Wilson's 1916 campaign, that is, a combination of the South with the progressive West. This has always been House's conception of the future of the Democratic Party. He is much more partial to such a line-up than to the traditional combination of the South with the great industrial centres of the East and Middle West. He wants to see a party organization which can readily be permanent, and if the Democrats are to constitute the party of liberalism the West is more important to them than the industrial areas north of the Potomac and the Ohio.

House never had any doubt of Roosevelt's nomination, once Farley and Howe had corralled the block of delegates they were able to bring to Chicago, just as he was never stampeded by the hullabaloo over Smith, a man for whom he has an intense admiration, but who, he was convinced, wouldn't be swallowed by the States which otherwise would be safest for the Democrats. And remember that elections are not won by planning for landslides or sweeps. They are won by figuring the margin of victory as closely and conservatively as possible. House *knew* the States which could be relied upon to go for Roosevelt, providing Roosevelt committed none of the unforgivable political sins on the stump, and he knew that they carried sufficient electoral votes to do the trick.

Now, then, what did House actually do to help Franklin Roosevelt win the biggest victory which ever fell to the portion of a Democratic candidate? He didn't go out and speak for him. He didn't attend prolonged political conferences. He didn't go to Chicago—he has never attended a political convention in his life. He visited national headquarters just once, on the urgence of Roosevelt's friends, a little gesture of compliment to the faithful workers, whose names never appear in the newspapers. But he read and criticized every speech and statement Roosevelt made, and had referred to him every important piece of tactics or strategy during the campaign. In most instances his counsel was taken. In two cases, where it was not, Roosevelt undoubtedly took stands which lost him

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

votes, a matter not of the first consequence, naturally, in view of the apparent determination of the mass of the people to elect him, no matter what he said. But the point is that on both these issues, Roosevelt went counter, not only to the opinion of House, but to the opinions of the other sound elder statesmen in the party, and it is already evident that he will have to shift his position on both issues next year.

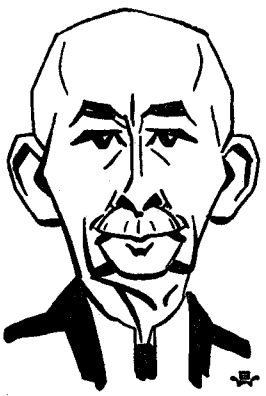
House's function in politics has always been to serve as a fount of ideas. He has never made a political speech in his life. He doesn't like the furore and din of political warfare in the open. He keeps himself free of it deliberately because to do so helps him to think more clearly, and he can find plenty of men to develop his ideas in action. And he never wastes effort. If he doesn't believe in a candidate he will have nothing to do with him. He is the only major politician in American history who never lost a battle to which he committed himself—he wasn't personally involved in the campaigns of 1920, 1924, and 1928. In 1920 he was a sick man, and, besides, Wilson's estrangement from him would have prevented his participation in any event. In 1924, much as he liked John W. Davis, he wasn't satisfied with certain influences which had developed in the party, and the same conditions kept him out in 1928. It is no secret that he has been firmly opposed to the spectacle of two or three very rich men being allowed to constitute themselves the almoners of the party.

He had his eye on Roosevelt in 1928, and when the Governor was re-elected in 1930 by a record majority he said openly to those he admitted to his confidence that the New Yorker was the logical man for 1932. But even then he wasn't disposed to do more than give Roosevelt the benefit of whatever help his endorsement meant. After all, he is an old man; he has worked hard all his life; he has no personal ambition to satisfy. But when Governor Roosevelt's mother came to him, and afterwards, the Governor, he saw a chance to help in achieving something which seemed more than ordinarily worth while, not merely the election of a Democratic President, but a healthy housecleaning in the ranks of the party, a new direction to Democratic endeavor. He asked Roosevelt just one question: "Where do you stand on Prohibition?" Roosevelt's answer satisfied him. He has always liked the man, always believed in his honor, integrity and ability to steer clear of the meretricious aspects of politics. But he hasn't advised Roosevelt on any subject, unless the Governor first asked his opinion—and he never will. Neither will he resent it, any more than he did with Wilson, when Roosevelt listens to his opinion and takes a contrary course. House never loses his temper, and doesn't claim always to be right. He remembers, with a grim sense of humor, that he once believed in Prohibition.

He has also a queer, almost a subconscious, sense of responsibility to the country for what has happened since the War, and more particularly, for the events of the last three years. I do not believe that he himself has ever consciously formulated this attitude of mind, but it creeps out continually in what he says. It isn't easy to put into words which would be fair to him, but the mental processes involved are something like this: He has never lost his affection for Woodrow Wilson; as Wilson's friend and lieutenant, he feels responsible to

—And Howe

The President-Elect



—And House

Caricatures by Ernst A. Wiegman

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

his leader's memory; he believes that much of the misery and suffering of recent years is traceable to the isolation of the United States, which was brought about by Wilson's refusal to compromise with the Senate over the Treaty of Versailles and the League Pact, for which, in part, at least, he blames himself—"If he only hadn't had that stroke," he says wistfully. "If I could have gotten to him once, all this wouldn't have happened, not so seriously, at any rate. We should have been in a position to force the readjustment of the war debts. The mess that had to come wouldn't have been nearly so bad."

HOUSE—THE GREAT COMPROMISER

In the political jargon of the Isolationists, House is an Internationalist. He cannot conceive of the United States as a self-contained unit, moving placidly and alone in an orbit which never impinges upon the tracks pursued by the other units of civilization. He envisages the modern world as a complex mechanism of interlocking parts, each one essential in some degree to the harmonious operation of the whole. He cannot imagine a highly industrialized United States as able to progress and realize a renewal of prosperity behind the barrier of a high protective tariff—the tariff, to him, is a weapon of defense to be used, and used sparingly, against nations practising the kind of international economy we have favored of late years. He doesn't believe that efficient industries need over-much protection. What they do need is steadily expanding markets. And with steadily expanding markets, an acceleration of domestic, no less than foreign, purchasing power, the government will not have to worry about taxes, especially taxes derived from imports, so meager as to cripple the ability of debtor nations to purchase from us what they really require and what our fields and factories are capable of producing in enormous volume.

A practical idealist, House believes in progress by compromise. He knows from experience that the full measure of attainment is seldom procurable. It has to be gained little by little. And so he would have had the United States join the League of Nations with any number of reservations rather than remain aloof all these years, allowing a score of thorny problems to grow up and flourish so that they thwart disarmament, peaceful relations, and the free flow of trade. If he has any influence with the next Administration he will use it, gently and patiently, to bring about as rapidly as possible the adoption by the United States of a positive rôle in international affairs. No more unofficial observers, no more delegations watching warily from the sidelines, distrusted and discounted by the representatives of nations whose harrying problems have been delayed too long by—as they believe—the unwillingness of the United States to assume her just share of the burden of maintaining civilization.

I remarked the other day to him that I had been told by two people that Roosevelt would appoint him either Secretary of State or ambassador at London. And I added that I was sure he wouldn't want either place, that there was only one office he would accept. "Oh, no," he exclaimed. "Surely, you know I wouldn't accept any office." "Yes, you would, Colonel," I retorted. "You would be glad to lead our first delegation to Geneva." His eyes lit up. "I guess you're right," he admitted.

House is too much of a realist to have illusions about war debts and reparations. If Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover had played our hand differently, we might have come off better; but it isn't enough to say: "Well, they hired the money, didn't they?" Money that was exploded into the stratosphere, that was used to shred apart millions of human beings, to annihilate the handiwork of a generation, such money isn't easily recovered from the hirer, unless you give him an unusual opportunity to rebuild the shattered fabric of his being. And this, in the view of House and those who think as he does, the United States did not do. Maybe they're right, maybe they're wrong. But if Roosevelt takes House's advice he may be expected to utilize the mounting reparations due us as a bargaining point with which to secure agreements to mitigate some of the world's sore spots, restore the overseas trade of the United States, and, most important of all, persuade the Great Powers finally to agree upon a practical and honest policy of disarmament.

It is doubtful if any living statesman has a wider or more intimate acquaintance with international personalities and problems than House. International politics always has been his hobby; he saturated himself in the atmosphere of world affairs during the Wilson Administration; and he has kept in close touch with what went on in the intervening years, in contrast to the aloof attitude he preserved toward domestic politics. Oddly, although in this country he suffered an eclipse after Wilson relegated him to private life, this has never been the case abroad. He had his finger in all the various attempts to make the reparations system work, in the creation of the Bank for International Settlements, in the termination of the Irish Revolution, and innumerable other matters. The British, the French, and the Germans have never forgotten that House was one man who anticipated in the spring of 1914 the disaster which was hovering over Europe and did his best to get them all together around a table, where they could thrash out their differences with words in place of bayonets. When an unofficial emissary of the British Ministry came over last fall to hold preliminary conversations with President Hoover on the subject of his country's

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

desire to postpone the December 15 payment of $95,000,000 due on her war debt, the only person the emissary interviewed outside the Administration was House.

Now, the question is: Will Roosevelt be disposed to accept House's advice on such knotty questions as the tariff, the war debts, the League of Nations, forthright commitment of the country in international affairs? A large element of our population, divided between both parties, is still fearful of membership in the League, and any citizen will grow pale at the idea of surrendering on any terms the billions other nations owe us, with the realization that we ourselves, then, must pay ourselves for what others spent. It has the look of a hard bargain, scarcely mitigated by the consideration that through adroit exploitation of our generosity we might be able to bring about a wholesale curtailment of armaments, on land, sea, and in the air, with assured advantage to our world trade, gain a general revision of tariffs, equally to our advantage, and win European support for our essential effort to curb the Japanese militarists. This last problem, by the way, is one of the most troublesome the Hoover Administration has left to Roosevelt, and it must be settled if the country is to obtain normal expansion of trade in Asia. In House's opinion it could never have developed had we been in the League and actively in touch with all the countries concerned.

CAMPAIGN STRADDLES

In his campaign speeches Roosevelt sheered away from House's views, not only on the tariff and the League of Nations, but on the bonus—he seemed, rather, to straddle the issue in each case, to be trying to placate the extremists at both ends of what the Scotch call the differ. Newton D. Baker very subtly called him to account on the tariff and the League, and however badly Hoover was beaten, the President made a distinctly more favorable impression upon the country at large than did Roosevelt by his bold opposition to any raid upon a Treasury confronting obligations which not even a fresh burst of prosperity could hope to satisfy in many years. House doesn't believe in bribing organized minorities, no matter how powerful they may be. He thinks the country should have learned a lesson from the Anti-Saloon League's activities, and the poisonous bane of prohibition. But in an attempt to estimate Roosevelt's final policies on all these debatable questions, it must be recalled that he said, not too seriously, to a banker who begged him to be more definite as to the tariff: "But, my dear sir, my immediate job is to get elected!" A very good political axiom, too, only it suggests that the Governor was more anxious about his chances than was necessary.

The confidential advisers of a political executive under the American system of government, which does not recognize the need for a permanent staff of undersecretaries in the several departments, can be of greater significance in his administration than the members of his cabinet. Wilson would have been lost without House—everything he touched turned to ashes after he discarded the Texan's counsel, beginning with his refusal to accept House's plea in the fall of 1918 not to issue a call for the election of a Democratic Congress, an insult which the Republican leaders never forgot and which was the vital factor in steeling the Senate's resolution to insist upon reservations to our acceptance of the Covenant in the Treaty of Versailles. Similarly, it would be next to impossible to imagine Franklin Roosevelt's career as Governor of New York, through four tumultuous years, including two years of skilful jockeying for the Democratic Presidential nomination, without the indefatigable figure of Colonel Howe at his elbow, Colonel Howe, who believes in Roosevelt with a concentrated determination of which Roosevelt, thanks to a keen sense of humor, isn't capable.

Roosevelt, like all successful political executives, is very dependent upon intelligent, unbiased advice. He can be made or ruined by the advice he accepts. For it is physically impossible for a man in his position, the Governor of a big State, the President of the United States, with an infinite number of details heaping upon his shoulders every day, to familiarize himself with all the subjects upon which he is required to make decisions. In matters of routine he must call upon the officials immediately concerned, absorb their views, frequently diverse, and reach his judgment thereon. In matters of transcendent public policy he must call upon whomever he believes to be best informed, and after weighing the advice tendered him, formulate a course which will settle the issue—and incidentally, win the public favor or public enmity.

It will be interesting to see how the Cabinet is framed. By the quality of its human material you can prognosticate with reasonable accuracy the probable course of the new President's career. The Democrats are blessed with a wealth of outstanding, capable men, but some of the most distinguished—Newton D. Baker, Frank Polk, John W. Davis, Bernard M. Baruch, John Raskob—have opposed Roosevelt's fortunes in the past, and are regarded with varying degrees of coolness. Two others, Owen D. Young and Melvin Traylor, had the misfortune to be involved in the Insull catastrophe, and no matter how valuable their services may be their presence in the Cabinet will invite criticism from disgruntled investors.

The key appointments, under existing conditions, will be those of Secretary of State and Secretary of the Treasury. The best men for the former office are in-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cluded in the list of those whose opposition to Roosevelt's nomination, or disagreement with his views, has given offense, while Norman H. Davis, of Tennessee, who has been Hoover's stalking horse at Geneva, is not regarded favorably for just this reason, although he is a very able man and familiar with the whole range of European politics. The Treasury post, however, will be still harder to fill, for the South and West would be jealous of any man who was identified with Wall Street. It is quite possible that if Senator Glass, of Virginia, regains his health it may be offered him. There is no doubt that he would be satisfactory to all sections and factions.

It seems likely, too, that the Cabinet will include a woman, in recognition of the increasingly important part played by women in all branches of politics, and the name most frequently heard in this connection is that of Frances E. Perkins, for many years, including those of the administrations of Smith and Roosevelt, New York's Industrial Commissioner, who has accomplished as much as any individual in the country to improve labor conditions. She would make an excellent Secretary of Labor.

WHAT DO THE PROGRESSIVES GET?

Another broad question of policy in building the Cabinet is presented by the advisability of recognizing the strong liberal Republican support Roosevelt received in the election. He will naturally hope to retain this in anticipation of running for re-election in 1936, but it is not probable that he or his advisers will consider the eligibility of any one brought forward by Hearst. They will, however, weigh carefully the merits of ex-Governor LaFollette, of Wisconsin. As Secretary of the Interior, LaFollette ought to be popular in the West, and it would be good politics to assure the continued support of the LaFollette machine—the Democrats have always had a feeling Wisconsin belonged on their side of the fence.

The Department of Agriculture will go, as a matter of course, to a dirt farmer from the West. Jim Farley can be Postmaster-General, if he wants to, but he should prefer to remain as National Chairman, and as a point of ethics anyway the two positions ought not to be held by the same individual, the Postmaster-General's job being to provide and control the patronage the National Chairman dispenses. It wouldn't look well, and appearances mean everything in politics, usually much more than principles.

The Attorney-Generalship will go to the South, which has plenty of good lawyers, but not so many business leaders of national importance. The Departments of War and the Navy are easy to provide for in times of peace, but it would please the soldiers if Roosevelt forgave Baker and offered the Ohioan his old job under Wilson. Baker would require persuading to accept any post, except, perhaps, the State Department, and my guess is that unless Colonel House's internationalist views are adopted more wholeheartedly by Roosevelt and Colonel Howe they will be unwilling to entrust the handling of foreign relations to a man who is so frank in his belief that the country's path lies toward early membership in the League. They will want to take time before they push for anything so drastic, hoping to cajole the recalcitrant Isolationists in their own party, at least. Senator Robinson, of Arkansas, who, it is reported, is to be displaced as floor-leader of the upper chamber by Senator Hull, of Tennessee, might be found available for the Navy Department—he is familiar with the Department's policies as a result of his services at several disarmament conferences. The one remaining department, Commerce, will be allotted to a banker or industrialist. Young or Traylor, if the Administration is willing to take the risk of radical criticism, would be suitable for the post, as would Baruch, of New York, again if Roosevelt decides to continue to play ball with the former controlling faction in the party's national organization. Others whose names will be canvassed are Raskob, Evans Woollen, of Indiana, Jeremiah Smith, of Boston, Jesse Straus, of New York, and a dozen men less prominent. But it may be taken for granted that, with the economic situation confronting the new Administration, Roosevelt's advisors will urge him to select a man whose personality will be widely known and calculated to inspire confidence.

After the Cabinet is framed Roosevelt can concentrate his attention upon the major problems in public policy, his handling of which will make or break him. They are: Prohibition, budget reduction, international debts, the tariff, and the complicated tangle of vexing questions lumped under the head of foreign policy. Prohibition he doesn't need to worry about, with a wet Congress eager to execute the popular will. Budget reduction, which he discussed very glibly during the campaign, won't be easy of attainment unless he persuades someone like Al Smith to make a thorough study of departmental expenditures. And the truth is that the actual problem here is not so much to find ways of curtailing expenditures as to augment the national revenue, an accomplishment dependent upon the success which attends his other policies—beer and wine taxes can be secured from import duties, if the Eighteenth Amendment is repealed; readjustment of the tariff and trade agreements with other countries, based upon a wise handling of the war debts issue, should stimulate commerce; and a direct foreign policy, demanding a measure of international co-operation, ought to produce disarmament on a scale which would not alone save us money but furnish other nations with more money to

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

spend in our markets. In plain language, bring back prosperity and deficits will disappear from the headlines, along with bonus marchers.

But every one of the five major problems is linked in some way, directly or indirectly, with the overshadowing question of foreign policy. And Roosevelt knows very little more about this subject than the average intelligent citizen who takes an interest in politics. Nor does Colonel Howe. Colonel House, however, has its ramifications at his fingers' tips; he is intimately acquainted with the whole background of the past twenty years in Europe and Asia; there is hardly a statesman of significance with whose character and idiosyncrasies he is not familiar. His views are generally known, but nobody has an inkling of Colonel Howe's theory of a foreign policy—unless, that is, he was responsible for several statements Roosevelt made during the campaign, which indicated a disposition to conciliate Hearst and the Isolationists. It is a difficult situation for Roosevelt, one, too, which will not permit of compromise, for, in House's opinion, that was the trouble with the foreign policy followed by the last three Republican Administrations. It was a makeshift of compromises and half-steps which never led anywhere. And according to Roosevelt's handling of it, his Administration will stand or fall, regardless of honesty of intention or courage in leadership.

In conclusion. There is one fundamental difference between the two colonels I haven't touched upon. Howe will stick to Roosevelt, no matter what he does or what happens to him. Roosevelt is Howe's first President, his idol, in a sense the creation of his own genius. But House has steered a President before. It's no novelty to him. He knows the human failings which are persistent in all great men—didn't he see a great man run off the track, with tragic consequences to untold millions of people? Roosevelt, to him, is simply a likely Democrat, possessing qualities which may be used to regenerate a prostrate country. My guess is that if Roosevelt doesn't fulfill his requirements as President, House will ease himself out of the picture, so slowly and gradually that it won't be noticed for a long time. But all of a sudden he won't be there.

Red Flame

By Walter Duranty

The Moscow correspondent of The New York Times *casts aside his reportorial style and indulges in a brief moment of "stream of consciousness," thereby effectively telling a tale and revealing something of what goes through a reporter's mind in Russia.*

Sitting in Moscow, November 1, 1931, in a room with an automatic telephone, and a lamp with an American bulb bought in Warsaw, and no heat in the pipes. Because the railroads don't carry the coal; and the coal doesn't get to the iron; so they can't make steel rails; to carry the coal to Moscow. Reading "Bab Ballads" . . . "I was a pale young curate then," and *The Dial,* dead and gone, and *Economyskaya Dzisn*— It doesn't matter how you spell it, because there's no right system of transliteration from Russian to English. Some one once wrote and asked me to work it out, but am I a reporter or a professor of philology? Drinking Caucasian port, number 777 . . . was that the Mark of the Beast? Or are the Bolsheviks Antichrist? And would 666 taste any different?

Thinking of what I did all day and heard and wrote, or didn't write, and why. One piece was Not Fit to Print; another wouldn't get by the censor, and if I did manage to write round him, the result would be so involved no one at home would understand it; the third might have got some one arrested, which is no joke in Russia; or is *everything* a joke in Russia, a *bloody* joke, and that's not swearing. Democritus said he laughed lest he should weep, but Heraclitus frankly preferred *gloom*. They would both have *felt at home* in Moscow, November, 1931, unless New York or London or Berlin might suit them better.

Maybe I should have cabled this story I'm going to tell you . . . they don't arrest them for that nowadays, but was it really *"news"*? What *is* "news," anyway? Something new, is one definition; new to your readers, is better. King Tut wasn't new, but he was *redhot* "news." Sex and blood and treasure and kids and animals and natural catastrophes, and crime and sport and stuff about People in View . . . that's "news," all of it, but I think "news" is anything a good reporter thinks is "news." If it isn't, he's not a good reporter. I wasn't sure about this story, but I'm not sure I'm a good reporter (and it *might* have got them arrested . . . one never knows in Moscow); though I believe I could

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

make almost *any* story about Baltics into "news": they are so *colorful*. (Do you hate that word? So do I.)

Baltic Barons, you know, descendants of the Teutonic Knights of the Sword, who conquered the coastland from Koenigsberg to Narva from the heathen, and held it for *themselves*. And stayed there till the War, seventeen generations of Armigeri, always fighters, never beaten, strong and permanent. The War did not beat them, but the Revolution broke them to pieces, and they lost their lands, but never lost *heart*. Even this woman in my story, she wouldn't give *up*. She didn't know what to do, but she wouldn't give *in*.

Russian aristocrats died or ran when the mob rushed their châteaux; but the *Baltics* were fighters. I met one in '19, a trooper in a "Whiteguard" squadron, who'd worn his hat in the presence of the Kaiser, or what have you, and bought the first tractors in Russia, and won a million francs on one bank in the "Cercle Prive" at Nice: though his toes stuck out of his left boot, as we talked in the dugout near Iacobstadt. He was lunching with his wife and her mother, upstairs on the first floor, when the Reds came to kill them. So he said quick, as if he was scared, "Wait a minute, boys: I'll buy my life from you, this drawer is full of *gold*." He ran to the sideboard, and had time to open the drawer and shoot. He chased them downstairs and out across the park.

He had fifty-three notches on his Luger pistol when I saw him: each a dead Communist: that day made the first six of them.

Another man boasted his family had been on eighty-seven campaigns with his lord's family, as soldier servants. And the funny part was he had gotten separated from his lord in the War, when the lord was wounded. The man went up, and became a colonel, and Hindenburg himself gave him "l'ordre pour le merite," if that's what they call it. (How like the Germans to use French for their top decoration!) and kissed him on both cheeks. (Perhaps that's French, and Hindenburg only saluted.) Anyhow he got said ordre pour le merite, and then the War was over. He came back to Riga and joined the Baltischer Landeswehr, this "Whiteguard" corps I spoke of,—and they made him a major at once, and his lord was there too . . . as a corporal. Both of them were born Russian subjects, of his Majesty Tsar Nicholas II, and had served in the German army. Which didn't help them to solve the problem of this hereditary servitor, set in a position of authority over his hereditary lord. They solved it themselves in their own way.

The Major gave orders and the Corporal obeyed them and saluted, as a corporal should salute a major in any army. But once every week the Major came into the dug-out, which the Corporal shared with four other corporals, one of Baltic noble blood like his own, one an Alsatian peasant who preferred Germany to France, one a small tough Jew, who really was Polish and hated Russia and Germany no less than he hated the Poles, and one an old-fashioned Baltic retainer of the Major's type. They knew why he came, but they all jumped smartly to attention and saluted. And he said, "Stand easy," or whatever the equivalent is in the German army. Then he went to a corner, and took his lord's boots, and *polished* them, and turned to his lord, and said "Herr Baron, your servant," and put the boots on the feet of his hereditary lord.

Which is a true story, and would make the Bolsheviks sick at their stomachs, but may help to explain why Germany *isn't* Bolshevik . . . yet.

Although as Heraclitus might have said, whom History called the Obscure, "You may drive a horse to the water, but what if the river is *dry?*" Are there ten million unemployed in America, or not? Or is America *dry?* Heraclitus was another of these damned pessimists. Don't you know that you can't sell America short, and that depression is only a *state* of *mind?* And the President said wages wouldn't be cut. Or do you have to work in order to eat? If so, why eat?

Which brings me to the story I began with about the woman and her husband, both of good Baltic blood, who had a great misfortune. Don't ask me how they lived through the last fourteen years, because I don't know, but they came of strong permanent stock, and maybe had friends abroad. Anyhow they lived and still owned between them three hundred dollars, in hundred-dollar bills. What that's worth in Soviet currency no one needs to calculate . . . life for a year or more to both of them. Unless it was taken away, or lost, like all the rest of their former possessions. The baroness hid it behind the stove all summer. They had only one room in Moscow, and were lucky at that, as they knew.

Once upon a time there was a château near Pskoff, where the baron's grandfather entertained a Tsar, and the town house in Petersburg and a 100,000 roubles a year income. Those good old days before the War, and before the *Revolution*.

So she hid what was left behind the stove, and forgot to tell him where she put it. It began to get cold in October, 1931, and he went out on a "volunteer expedition," to load firewood from the station with the rest of the tenants in the house. Because he wanted to show them the old stuff was *dead,* and *gone,* like *The Dial.* They gave him a few sticks of wood for his private share, and she was still away at work when he got back. He lit a fire in the stove, to greet her when she came home. Can't a little room be *home* no less than a *château?* He knew she'd be tired and cold, so he made tea as well on the stove, because he loved her . . . till

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

death do us part, in sickness or health, happiness or wealth. She wasn't beautiful any more, and he wasn't wealthy, and neither of them was happy, but he *loved* her, and lit the stove for her with the bits of wood they'd let him take, to warm her if he couldn't make her happy. Then the heat of the stove charred the hundred-dollar bills to thin ashes, crisp and flaky like breakfast food, but *not* eatable.

He didn't know she'd hidden them there, and he lit the stove because he couldn't get a job, and was her true lover all these years, and couldn't help her *ever,* and his name and former rank damned them both. He knew she'd be cold when she came home, and these bits of wood were the *first thing* he could give her for months and years. He thought she'd be glad when she came home, and happy just for a moment. He didn't know she'd hidden the dollars behind the stove, but he did know that he loved her and she loved him, and that they had these dollars between them, somewhere in her keeping. His heart was weak, he knew that too, and dollars would buy medicine and luxuries in Moscow. Often he wished he was dead, but he did not want to die. Who does, even if they believe in God, and who can believe in God in Russia on November 1, 1931?

When his wife came back and saw the stove and the glass of steaming tea, and the pride and joy in his eyes, she knew in a flash that the bills were charred to ashes. She'd shared everything with him, sickness and health, poverty and wealth, till death do us part. *But she couldn't share this now,* because of his heart: the doctor had said a shock would kill him.

A Russian doctor told me that once, and said I couldn't run or make love, or drink hard liquor, or carry any weight. He said the slightest shock would be fatal. Then the best heart specialist in Paris, Clemenceau's doctor, told me it was only nerves that made the heart beat irregularly. A week later I got smashed in a train wreck, and had seven operations in five months . . . if that isn't shock, what is? Maybe Russian doctors of the old school have reasons for pessimism: maybe they have a *lot* of reasons.

But she didn't know all that: she believed the doctor. She'd stopped believing in God, but she believed the doctor. Well, so did I till another doctor told me different; then I believed him. You've got to believe in something, haven't you? Even in Moscow, in November, 1931. So she didn't dare to tell him. She smiled at him and thanked him for the tea, and said, "You might ask Marfoosha in the kitchen for some sugar: offer her what's left of our jam in exchange." He smiled back with eyes of pride and joy and love and went out to ask. The dollar bills *were* charred to ashes.

Her only thought was at last she was glad that Sonny had died, although it caught her own throat to remember how he fought for breath: and the doctor in Riga said, "If only we could get the serum," and she cabled through Sweden to relatives in Germany, but they couldn't get it. There was no way to get it, and Sonny died, and the message she sent to the front never reached her husband. When he came back on leave next time he asked at once, "But where's the youngster, why didn't you bring him to meet me?" *Nothing* had ever been worse than that: nothing that happened, however bad. But *now* she was glad, really glad deep down inside her, that Sonny was dead.

They began heating my pipes an hour or two ago; and my lamp with its American bulb from Warsaw gives light, and my Caucasian port is strong and sweet . . . am I my brother's keeper?

Cain asked *that.*

A SONG DURING BUSINESS DEPRESSION

By Vachel Lindsay

Oh, shame upon you, sons of men,
You cannot laugh nor weep
Till you have lost the coin of men,
And then have drunken deep.

The coin of prophet-angels goes
To those who cannot sleep
And truly laugh and weep.

When maddened well by fate or wine
You lose your stiff-brained pride,
Worthy, at least, by tears divine,
Though all your wit has died,
You mourn for all the lost of earth,
Life's august uncertainty
At last you know divine.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

There Was a Queen

A STORY

By William Faulkner

ELNORA entered the back yard, coming up from her cabin. In the long afternoon the huge, square house, the premises, lay somnolent, peaceful, as they had lain for almost a hundred years, since John Sartoris had come from Carolina and built it. And he had died in it and his son Bayard had died in it, and Bayard's son John and John's son Bayard in turn had been buried from it even though the last Bayard didn't die there.

So the quiet was now the quiet of womenfolks. As Elnora crossed the back yard toward the kitchen door she remembered how ten years ago at this hour old Bayard, who was her half-brother (though possibly but not probably neither of them knew it, including Bayard's father), would be tramping up and down the back porch, shouting stableward for the Negro men and for his saddle mare. But he was dead now, and his grandson Bayard was also dead at twenty-six years old, and the Negro men were gone: Simon, Elnora's mother's husband, in the graveyard too, and Caspey, Elnora's husband, in the penitentiary for stealing, and Joby, her son, gone to Memphis to wear fine clothes on Beale Street. So there were left in the house only the first John Sartoris' sister, Virginia, who was ninety years old and who lived in a wheel chair beside a window above the flower garden, and Narcissa, young Bayard's widow, and her son. Virginia Du Pre had come out to Mississippi in '69, the last of the Carolina family, bringing with her the clothes in which she stood and a basket containing a few panes of colored glass from a Carolina window and a few flower cuttings and two bottles of port. She had seen her brother die and then her nephew and then her great-nephew and then her two great-great-nephews, and now she lived in the unmanned house with her great-great-nephew's wife and his son, Benbow, whom she persisted in calling Johnny after his uncle, who was killed in France. And for Negroes there were Elnora who cooked, and her son Isom who tended the grounds, and her daughter Saddie who slept on a cot beside Virginia Du Pre's bed and tended her as though she were a baby.

But that was all right. "I can take care of her," Elnora thought, crossing the back yard. "I don't need no help," she said aloud, to no one—a tall, coffee-colored woman with a small, high, fine head. "Because it's a Sartoris job. Cunnel knowed that when he died and tole me to take care of her. Tole me. Not no outsiders from town." She was thinking of what had caused her to come up to the house an hour before it was necessary. This was that, while busy in her cabin, she had seen Narcissa, young Bayard's wife, and the ten-year-old boy going down across the pasture in the middle of the afternoon. She had come to her door and watched them —the boy and the big young woman in white going through the hot afternoon, down across the pasture toward the creek. She had not wondered where they were going, nor why, as a white woman would have wondered. But she was half black, and she just watched the white woman with that expression of quiet and grave contempt with which she contemplated or listened to the orders of the wife of the house's heir even while he was alive. Just as she had listened two days ago when Narcissa had informed her that she was going to Memphis for a day or so and that Elnora would have to take care of the old aunt alone. "Like I ain't always done it," Elnora thought. "It's little you done for anybody since you come out here. We never needed you. Don't you never think it." But she didn't say this. She just thought it, and she helped Narcissa prepare for the trip and watched the carriage roll away toward town and the station without comment. "And you needn't to come back," she thought, watching the carriage disappear. But this morning Narcissa had returned, without offering to explain the sudden journey or the sudden return, and in the early afternoon Elnora from her cabin door had watched the woman and the boy go down across the pasture in the hot June sunlight.

"Well, it's her business where she going," Elnora said aloud, mounting the kitchen steps. "Same as it her business how come she went off to Memphis, leaving Miss Jenny setting yonder in her chair without nobody but niggers to look after her," she added, aloud still, with brooding inconsistency. "I ain't surprised she went. I just surprised she come back. No. I ain't even that. She ain't going to leave this place, now she done got in here." Then she said quietly, aloud, without rancor, without heat: "Trash. Town trash."

She entered the kitchen. Her daughter Saddie sat at

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the table, eating from a dish of cold turnip greens and looking at a thumbed and soiled fashion magazine. "What you doing back here?" she said. "Why ain't you up yonder where you can hear Miss Jenny if she call you?"

"Miss Jenny ain't need nothing," Saddie said. "She setting there by the window."

"Where did Miss Narcissa go?"

"I don't know'm," Saddie said. "Her and Bory went off somewhere. Ain't come back yet."

Elnora grunted. Her shoes were not laced, and she stepped out of them in two motions and left the kitchen and went up the quiet, high-ceiled hall filled with scent from the garden and with the drowsing and myriad sounds of the June afternoon, to the open library door. Beside the window (the sash was raised now, with its narrow border of colored Carolina glass which in the winter framed her head and bust like a hung portrait) an old woman sat in a wheel chair. She sat erect; a thin, upright woman with a delicate nose and hair the color of a whitewashed wall. About her shoulders lay a shawl of white wool, no whiter than her hair against her black dress. She was looking out the window; in profile her face was high-arched, motionless. When Elnora entered she turned her head and looked at the Negress with an expression immediate and interrogative.

"They ain't come in the back way, have they?" she said.

"Nome," Elnora said. She approached the chair.

The old woman looked out the window again. "I must say I don't understand this at all. Miss Narcissa's doing a mighty lot of traipsing around all of a sudden. Picking up and——"

Elnora came to the chair. "A right smart," she said in her cold, quiet voice, "for a woman lazy as her."

"Picking up—" the old woman said. She ceased. "You stop talking that way about her."

"I ain't said nothing but the truth," Elnora said.

"Then you keep it to yourself. She's Bayard's wife. A Sartoris woman, now."

"She won't never be a Sartoris woman," Elnora said.

The other was looking out the window. "Picking up all of a sudden two days ago and going to Memphis to spend two nights, that hadn't spent a night away from that boy since he was born. Leaving him for two whole nights, mind you, without giving any reason, and then coming home and taking him off to walk in the woods in the middle of the day. Not that he missed her. Do you think he missed her at all while she was gone?"

"Nome," Elnora said. "Ain't no Sartoris man never missed nobody."

"Of course he didn't." The old woman looked out the window. Elnora stood a little behind the chair. "Did they go on across the pasture?"

"I don't know. They went out of sight, still going. Toward the creek."

"Toward the creek? What in the world for?"

Elnora didn't answer. She stood a little behind the chair, erect, still as an Indian. The afternoon was drawing on. The sun was now falling level across the garden below the window, and soon the jasmine in the garden began to smell with evening, coming into the room in slow waves almost palpable; thick, sweet, oversweet. The two women were motionless in the window: the one leaning a little forward in the wheel chair, the Negress a little behind the chair, motionless too and erect as a caryatid.

The light in the garden was beginning to turn copper-colored when the woman and the boy entered the garden and approached the house. The old woman in the chair leaned suddenly forward. To Elnora it seemed as if the old woman in the wheel chair had in that motion escaped her helpless body like a bird and crossed the garden to meet the child; moving forward a little herself Elnora could see on the other's face an expression fond, immediate, and oblivious. So the two people had crossed the garden and were almost to the house when the old woman sat suddenly and sharply back. "Why, they're wet!" she said. "Look at their clothes. They have been in the creek with their clothes on!"

"I reckon I better go and get supper started," Elnora said.

II

In the kitchen Elnora prepared the lettuce and the tomatoes, and sliced the bread (not honest cornbread, not even biscuit) which the woman whose very name she did not speak unless it was absolutely necessary, had taught her to bake. Isom and Saddie sat in two chairs against the wall. "I got nothing against her," Elnora said. "I nigger and she white. But my black children got more blood than she got. More behavior."

"You and Miss Jenny both think ain't nobody been born since Miss Jenny," Isom said.

"Who is been?" Elnora said.

"Miss Jenny get along all right with Miss Narcissa," Isom said. "Seem to me like she the one to say. I ain't heard her say nothing about it."

"Because Miss Jenny quality," Elnora said. "That's why. And that's something you don't know nothing about, because you born too late to see any of it except her."

"Look to me like Miss Narcissa good quality as anybody else," Isom said. "I don't see no difference."

Elnora moved suddenly from the table. Isom as suddenly sprang up and moved his chair out of his mother's path. But she only went to the cupboard and took a platter from it and returned to the table, to the to-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

matoes. "Born Sartoris or born quality of any kind ain't *is,* it's *does.*" She talked in a level, inflectionless voice above her limber, brown, deft hands. When she spoke of the two women she used "she" indiscriminately, putting the least inflection on the one which referred to Miss Jenny. "Come all the way here by Herself, and the country still full of Yankees. All the way from Callina, with Her folks all killed and dead except old Marse John, and him two hundred miles away in Missippi——"

"It's moren two hundred miles from here to Callina," Isom said. "Learnt that in school. It's nigher two thousand."

Elnora's hands did not cease. She did not seem to have heard him. "With the Yankees done killed Her paw and Her husband and burned the Cal-lina house over Her and Her mammy's head, and She come all the way to Missippi by Herself, to the only kin She had left. Getting here in the dead of winter without nothing in this world of God's but a basket with some flower seeds and two bottles of wine and them colored window panes old Marse John put in the library window so She could look through it like it was Cal-lina. She got here at dusk-dark on Christmas Day and old Marse John and the chillen and my mammy waiting on the porch, and Her setting high-headed in the wagon for old Marse John to lift Her down. They never even kissed then, out there where folks could see them. Old Marse John just said, 'Well, Jenny,' and she just said, 'Well, Johnny,' and they walked into the house, him leading Her by the hand, until they was inside the house where the commonality couldn't spy on them. Then She begun to cry, and old Marse John holding Her, after all them four thousand miles——"

"It ain't four thousand miles from here to Cal-lina," Isom said. "Ain't but two thousand. What the book say in school."

Elnora paid no attention to him at all; her hands did not cease. "It took Her hard, the crying did. 'It's because I ain't used to crying,' she said. 'I got out of the habit of it. I never had the time. Them goddamn Yankees,' she said. 'Them goddamn Yankees.'" Elnora moved again, to the cupboard. It was as though she walked out of the sound of her voice on her silent, naked feet, leaving it to fill the quiet kitchen though the voice itself had ceased. She took another platter down and returned to the table, her hands busy again among the tomatoes and lettuce, the food which she herself could not eat. "And that's how it is that she" (she was now speaking of Narcissa; the two Negroes knew it) "thinks she can pick up and go to Memphis and frolic, and leave Her alone in this house for two nights without nobody but niggers to look after. Move out here under a Sartoris roof and eat Sartoris food for ten years, and then pick up and go to Memphis same as a nigger on a excursion, without even telling why she was going."

"I thought you said Miss Jenny never needed nobody but you to take care of her," Isom said. "I thought you said yesterday you never cared if she come back or not."

Elnora made a sound, harsh, disparaging, not loud. "Her not come back? When she worked for five years to get herself married to Bayard? Working on Miss Jenny all the time Bayard was off to that war? I watched her. Coming out here two or three times a week, with Miss Jenny thinking she was just coming out to visit like quality. But I knowed. I knowed what she was up to all the time. Because I knows trash. I knows the way trash goes about working in with quality. Quality can't see that, because it quality. But I can."

"Then Bory must be trash, too," Isom said.

Elnora turned now. But Isom was already out of his chair before she spoke. "You shut your mouth and get yourself ready to serve supper." She watched him go to the sink and prepare to wash his hands. Then she turned back to the table, her long hands brown and deft among the red tomatoes and the pale absinth-green of the lettuce. "Needings," she said. "It ain't Bory's needings and it ain't Her needings. It's dead folks' needings. Old Marse John's and Cunnel's and Mister John's and Bayard's that's dead and can't do nothing about it. That's where the needings is. That's what I'm talking about. And not nobody to see to it except Her yonder in that chair, and me, a nigger, back here in this kitchen. I ain't got nothing against her. I just say to let quality consort with quality, and unquality do the same thing. You get that coat on, now. This here is all ready."

III

It was the boy who told her. She leaned forward in the wheel chair and watched through the window as the woman and the child crossed the garden and passed out of sight beyond the angle of the house. Still leaning forward and looking down into the garden, she heard them enter the house and pass the library door and mount the stairs. She did not move, nor look toward the door. She continued to look down into the garden, at the now stout shrubs which she had fetched from Carolina as shoots not much bigger than matches. It was in the garden that she and the younger woman who was to marry her nephew and bear a son, had become acquainted. That was back in 1918, and young Bayard and his brother John were still in France. It was before John was killed, and two or three times a week Narcissa would come out from town to visit her while she worked among the flowers. "And she engaged to Bayard all the time and not telling me," the old wo-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

man thought. "But it was little she ever told me about anything," she thought, looking down into the garden which was beginning to fill with twilight and which she had not entered in five years. "Little enough about anything. Sometimes I wonder how she ever got herself engaged to Bayard, talking so little. Maybe she did it by just being, filling some space, like she got that letter." That was one day shortly before Bayard returned home. Narcissa came out and stayed for two hours, then just before she left she showed the letter. It was anonymous and obscene; it sounded mad, and at the time she had tried to get Narcissa to let her show the letter to Bayard's grandfather and have him make some effort to find the man and punish him, but Narcissa refused. "I'll just burn it and forget about it," Narcissa said. "Well, that's your business," the older woman said. "But that should not be permitted. A lady should not be at the mercy of a man like that, even by mail. Any gentleman will believe that, act upon it. Besides, if you don't do something about it, he'll write you again." "Then I'll show it to Colonel Sartoris," Narcissa said. She was an orphan, her brother also in France. "But can't you see? I just can't have any man know that anybody thought such things about me." "Well, I'd rather have the whole world know that somebody thought that way about me once and got horsewhipped for it, than to have him keep on thinking that way about me, unpunished. But it's your affair." "I'll just burn it and forget about it," Narcissa said. Then Bayard returned, and shortly afterward he and Narcissa were married and Narcissa came out to the house to live. Then she was pregnant, and before the child was born Bayard was killed in an airplane, and his grandfather, old Bayard, was dead and the child came, and it was two years before she thought to ask her niece if any more letters had come; and Narcissa told her no.

So they had lived quietly then, their women's life in the big house without men. Now and then she had urged Narcissa to marry again. But the other had refused, quietly, and they had gone on so for years, the two of them and the child whom she persisted in calling after his dead uncle. Then one evening a week ago, Narcissa had a guest for supper; when she learned that the guest was to be a man, she sat quite still in her chair for a time. "Ah," she thought, quietly. "It's come. Well. But it had to; she is young. And to live out here alone with a bedridden old woman. Well. But I wouldn't have her do as I did. Would not expect it of her. After all, she is not a Sartoris. She is no kin to them, to a lot of fool proud ghosts." The guest came. She did not see him until she was wheeled into the supper table. Then she saw a bald, youngish man with a clever face and a Phi Beta Kappa key on his watch chain. The key she did not recognize, but she knew at once that he was a Jew, and when he spoke to her her outrage became fury and she jerked back in the chair like a striking snake, the motion strong enough to thrust the chair back from the table. "Narcissa," she said, "what is this Yankee doing here?"

There they were, about the candle-lit table, the three rigid people. Then the man spoke: "Madam," he said, "there'd be no Yankees left if your sex had ever taken the field against us."

"You don't have to tell me that, young man," she said. "You can thank your stars it was just men your grandfather fought." Then she had called Isom and had herself wheeled from the table, taking no supper. And even in her bedroom she would not let them turn on the light, and she refused the tray which Narcissa sent up. She sat beside her dark window until the stranger was gone.

Then three days later Narcissa made her sudden and mysterious trip to Memphis and stayed two nights, who had never before been separated overnight from her son since he was born. She had gone without explanation and returned without explanation, and now the old woman had just watched her and the boy cross the garden, their garments still damp upon them, as though they had been in the creek.

It was the boy who told her. He came into the room in fresh clothes, his hair still damp, though neatly combed now. She said no word as he entered and came to her chair. "We been in the creek," he said. "Not swimming, though. Just sitting in the water. She wanted me to show her the swimming hole. But we didn't swim. I don't reckon she can. We just sat in the water with our clothes on. All evening. She wanted to do it."

"Ah," the old woman said. "Oh. Well. That must have been fun. Is she coming down soon?"

"Yessum. When she gets dressed."

"Well. . . . You'll have time to go outdoors a while before supper, if you want to."

"I just as soon stay in here with you, if you want me to."

"No. You go outdoors. I'll be all right until Saddie comes."

"All right." He left the room.

The window failed slowly as the sunset died. The old woman's silver head faded too, like something motionless on a sideboard. The sparse colored panes which framed the window dreamed, rich and hushed. She sat there and presently she heard her nephew's wife descending the stairs. She sat quietly, watching the door, until the young woman entered.

She wore white: a large woman in her thirties, with-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in the twilight something about her of that heroic quality of statuary. "Do you want the light?" she said.

"No," the old woman said. "No. Not yet." She sat erect in the wheel chair, motionless, watching the young woman cross the room, her white dress flowing slowly, heroic, like a caryatid from a temple façade come to life. She sat down.

"It was those let——" she said.

"Wait," the old woman said. "Before you begin. The jasmine. Do you smell it?"

"Yes. It was those——"

"Wait. Always about this time of day it begins. It has begun about this time of day in June for fifty-seven years this summer. I brought them from Carolina, in a basket. I remember how that first March I sat up all one night, burning newspapers about the roots. Do you smell it?"

"Yes."

"If it's marriage, I told you. I told you five years ago that I wouldn't blame you. A young woman, a widow. Even though you have a child, I told you that a child would not be enough. I told you I would not blame you for not doing as I had done. Didn't I?"

"Yes. But it's not that bad."

"Not? Not how bad?" The old woman sat erect, her head back a little, her thin face fading into the twilight with a profound quality. "I won't blame you. I told you that. You are not to consider me. My life is done; I need little; nothing the Negroes can't do. Don't you mind me, do you hear?" The other said nothing, motionless too, serene; their voices seemed to materialize in the dusk between them, unsourced of either mouth, either still and fading face. "You'll have to tell me, then," the old woman said.

"It was those letters. Thirteen years ago: don't you remember? Before Bayard came back from France, before you even knew that we were engaged. I showed you one of them and you wanted to give it to Colonel Sartoris and let him find out who sent it and I wouldn't do it and you said that no lady would permit herself to receive anonymous love letters, no matter how badly she wanted to."

"Yes. I said it was better for the world to know that a lady had received a letter like that, than to have one man in secret thinking such things about her, unpunished. You told me you burned it."

"I lied. I kept it. And I got ten more of them. I didn't tell you because of what you said about a lady."

"Ah," the old woman said.

"Yes. I kept them all. I thought I had them hidden where nobody could ever find them."

"And you read them again. You would take them out now and then and read them again."

"I thought I had them hidden. Then you remember that night after Bayard and I were married when somebody broke into our house in town; the same night that book-keeper in Colonel Sartoris' bank stole that money and ran away? The next morning the letters were gone, and then I knew who had sent them."

"Yes," the old woman said. She had not moved, her fading head like something inanimate in silver.

"So they were out in the world. They were somewhere. I was crazy for a while. I thought of people, men, reading them, seeing not only my name on them, but the marks of my eyes where I had read them again and again. I was wild. When Bayard and I were on our honeymoon, I was wild. I couldn't even think about him alone. It was like I was having to sleep with all the men in the world at the same time.

"Then it was almost twelve years ago, and I had Bory, and I suppose I had got over it. Got used to having them out in the world. Maybe I had begun to think that they were gone, destroyed, and I was safe. Now and then I would remember them, but it was like somehow that Bory was protecting me, that they couldn't pass him to reach me. As though if I just stayed out here and was good to Bory and you— And then, one afternoon, after twelve years, that man came out to see me, that Jew. The one who stayed to supper that night."

"Ah," the old woman said. "Yes."

"He was a Federal agent. They were still trying to catch the man who had robbed the bank, and the agent had got hold of my letters. Found them where the book-keeper had lost them or thrown them away that night while he was running away, and the agent had had them twelve years, working on the case. At last he came out to see me, trying to find out where the man had gone, thinking I must know, since the man had written me letters like that. You remember him: how you looked at him and you said, 'Narcissa, who is this Yankee?'"

"Yes. I remember."

"That man had my letters. He had had them for twelve years. He——"

"*Had* had?" the old woman said. "*Had* had?"

"Yes. I have them now. He hadn't sent them to Washington yet, so nobody had read them except him. And now nobody will ever read them." She ceased; she breathed quietly, tranquil. "You don't understand yet, do you? He had all the information the letters could give him, but he would have to turn them in to the Department anyway and I asked him for them but he said he would have to turn them in and I asked him if he would make his final decision in Memphis and he said why Memphis and I told him why. I knew I couldn't buy them from him with money, you see. That's why I had to go to Memphis. I had that much regard for Bory and you, to go somewhere else. And that's all. Men are all about the same, with their ideas of good and bad. Fools." She breathed quietly. Then

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

she yawned, deep, with utter relaxation. Then she stopped yawning. She looked again at the rigid, fading silver head opposite her. "Don't you understand yet?" she said. "I had to do it. They were mine; I had to get them back. That was the only way I could do it. But I would have done more than that. So I got them. And now they are burned up. Nobody will ever see them. Because he can't tell, you see. It would ruin him to ever tell that they even existed. They might even put him in the penitentiary. And now they are burned up."

"Yes," the old woman said. "And so you came back home and you took Johnny so you and he could sit together in the creek, the running water. In Jordan. Yes. Jordan at the back of a country pasture in Missippi."

"I had to get them back. Don't you see that?"

"Yes," the old woman said. "Yes." She sat bolt upright in the wheel chair. "Well, my Lord. Us poor, fool women—Johnny!" Her voice was sharp, peremptory.

"What?" the young woman said. "Do you want something?"

"No," the other said. "Call Johnny. I want my hat." The young woman rose. "I'll get it."

"No. I want Johnny to do it."

The young woman stood looking down at the other, the old woman erect in the wheel chair beneath the fading silver crown of her hair. Then she left the room. The old woman did not move. She sat there in the dusk until the boy entered, carrying a small black bonnet of an ancient shape. Now and then, when the old woman became upset, they would fetch her the hat and she would place it on the exact top of her head and sit there by the window. He brought the bonnet to her. His mother was with him. It was full dusk now; the old woman was invisible save for her hair. "Do you want the light now?" the young woman said.

"No," the old woman said. She set the bonnet on the top of her head. "You all go on to supper and let me rest a while. Go on, all of you." They obeyed, leaving her sitting there: a slender, erect figure indicated only by the single gleam of her hair, in the wheel chair beside the window framed by the sparse and defunctive Carolina glass.

IV

Since the boy's eighth birthday, he had had his dead grandfather's place at the end of the table. Tonight however his mother rearranged things. "With just the two of us," she said. "You come and sit by me." The boy hesitated. "Please. Won't you? I got so lonesome for you last night in Memphis. Weren't you lonesome for me?"

"I slept with Aunt Jenny," the boy said. "We had a good time."

"Please."

"All right," he said. He took the chair beside hers.

"Closer," she said. She drew the chair closer. "But we won't ever again, ever. Will we?" She leaned toward him, taking his hand.

"What? Sit in the creek?"

"Not ever leave one another again."

"I didn't get lonesome. We had a good time."

"Promise. Promise, Bory." His name was Benbow, her family name.

"All right."

Isom, in a duck jacket, served them and returned to the kitchen.

"She ain't coming to supper?" Elnora said.

"Nome," Isom said. "Setting yonder by the window, in the dark. She say she don't want no supper."

Elnora looked at Saddie. "What was they doing last time you went to the library?"

"Her and Miss Narcissa talking."

"They was still talking when I went to 'nounce supper," Isom said. "I tole you that."

"I know," Elnora said. Her voice was not sharp. Neither was it gentle. It was just peremptory, soft, cold. "What were they talking about?"

"I don't know'm," Isom said. "You the one taught me not to listen to white folks."

"What were they talking about, Isom?" Elnora said. She was looking at him, grave, intent, commanding.

"'Bout somebody getting married. Miss Jenny say 'I tole you long time ago I ain't blame you. A young woman like you. I want you to marry. Not do like I done,' what she say."

"I bet she fixing to marry, too," Saddie said.

"Who marry?" Elnora said. "Her marry? What for? Give up what she got here? That ain't what it is. I wished I knowed what been going on here this last week. . . ." Her voice ceased; she turned her head toward the door as though she were listening for something. From the dining-room came the sound of the young woman's voice. But Elnora appeared to listen to something beyond this. Then she left the room. She did not go hurriedly, yet her long silent stride carried her from sight with an abruptness like that of an inanimate figure drawn on wheels, off a stage.

She went quietly up the dark hall, passing the dining-room door unremarked by the two people at the table. They sat close. The woman was talking, leaning toward the boy. Elnora went on without a sound: a converging of shadows upon which her lighter face seemed to float without body, her eyeballs faintly white. Then she stopped suddenly. She had not reached the library door, yet she stopped, invisible, soundless, her eyes suddenly quite luminous in her almost-vanished face, and she began to chant in faint sing-song: "Oh, Lawd; oh, Lawd," not loud. Then she moved, went swiftly on to the library door and looked into the room where beside

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the dead window the old woman sat motionless, indicated only by that faint single gleam of white hair, as though for ninety years life had died slowly up her spare, erect frame, to linger for a twilit instant about her head before going out, though life itself had ceased. Elnora looked for only an instant into the room. Then she turned and retraced her swift and silent steps to the dining-room door. The woman still leaned toward the boy, talking. They did not remark Elnora at once. She stood in the doorway, tall, not touching the jamb on either side. Her face was blank; she did not appear to be looking at, speaking to, any one.

"You better come quick, I reckon," she said in that soft, cold, peremptory voice.

The Loss of the "Melbourne"

By A. J. Villiers

A dramatic true tale of the sea—of no longer ago than last July—told by the author of "By Way of Cape Horn" and "Falmouth for Orders."

DAYLONG the gale freshened in vicious squalls, bringing up a nasty sea that crashed and broke and roared about the decks of the running barque as she staggered and lurched upon her way. Green sea gushed from scuppers and from washports as she rolled; high aloft her trucks circled and recircled wild anguished arcs in the murk of the low sky as the vessel labored. On deck, lifelines and life nets were useless for their purpose—the safety of life—and the boy-crew waited hour after hour huddled on the exposure of the poop—exposed there, but out of the reach of the worst of the seas. Hourly the helm was relieved, with four boys straining there—sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds who had not previously suffered the hell that is a square-rigger, undermanned and overloaded, running for Cape Horn. They shivered and shook in the bitter cold, wet through with the driving spray and the hail and rain, and tightened their belts and licked their salt-blackened lips, and thought perhaps of their sisters safely at home in bed 10,000 miles away.

The weather had been bad for the previous seven days, and the *Melbourne* was already under shortest of storm canvas as she labored on. Aloft, but three strips of sodden, wind-distended canvas stood before the gale, from her lower tops'l yards; for'ard, a wisp of a storm stays'l helped her keep her head. Beyond this no canvas stood but a weather cloth lashed in the jigger rigging, from the scant shelter of which Captain Johansson and his mate looked out upon the sea and the running ship.

"The glass is still falling," the captain yelled in his subordinate's ear. "We are in for a night of it!"

"She is taking a hammering now," the mate roared in reply. "God knows how much more of this she can stand."

Captain Johansson made no reply. Well he knew there was none to make. His ship was out of his hands now; she could only run on. It was too late to bring her into that murderous sea, to lie hove-to until the storm had spent its fury. The time to try that was long past; now he could only run on and hope that the sea did his ship no vital damage—that the rigging and the hatches held, and the young helmsmen did not allow her to fall away into the trough of the sea. . . .

So nightfall found them—all hands still huddled aft, the ship staggering, rolling, lurching, flinging herself on, streaming sea all over her, her wet steel masts picked out with icicles into which the snow had frozen, her great hull wallowing and floundering in the seas which gave her no moment's respite. Now she ran bravely, fighting with each sea as it threatened to overwhelm her, smashing aboard. Thirteen, fourteen knots she reached! Main deck awash green fore and aft, capstans, hatches, deckhouses, everything hidden in a constant whirl of breaking water, both rails under as she rolled, she staggered on picking her path through the dangerous seas.

Now the bos'n and the third mate relieved one another hourly at the weather helm, with four boys to help them. They were little more than boys themselves. Captain Johansson was forty-two; no one else in the ship had reached thirty. The average age of the crew was about seventeen. . . . Still the *Melbourne* ran before the storm. No damage yet; the sails hold: the hatches stand. Her 4500 tons of grain lie heavy in her belly and hold her as the graybeards race upon her; yet the bulwarks, the rigging, and the gear hold. No one is injured. On she goes! Sea smoking with anger, hail and rain and snow lashing at the crew alternately, the great hull plunging madly and trembling, now and

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

again, with the shock of the breaking seas. . . .

A bad night, well enough. There was no oil to put upon the waters, to aid in quieting them. There was no spare oil in the ship.

Still the gale rose, in madder and madder squalls, until the very night became insane and the giant seas rose black and mountainous all around while the scream of the wind in the steel rigging was evil and exultant. Now the ship threw her bowsprit in anguish to high heaven, while cascades of water broke over her fore and aft. No longer could she run on safely; yet there was now even less chance of heaving her to. She *had* to go on—sink or swim. . . .

At midnight the same, with no abatement—no sign of barometer rise or better weather.

A little after midnight there came a mighty squall which made its predecessors seem like doldrum airs: the straining boys at the wheel could not get the helm up in time: the ship would not go off: green water smashed over the length of her. Now the sea held her down; now it had her! Before she had a chance to clear the first, two more great seas thundered over either rail, converging upon her, smashing over her. The ocean now passed over the entire main deck as if the ship had not been there. She stopped in her stride, writhing there, panting like a living thing that had been dangerously wounded, held down by the weight of the water, borne on by her overpress of sail. Now the sea roared, the gale screamed, the hail hissed, the canvas thundered! None knew even whether the crew was still on board—half of it might easily not have been: through the height of the gale Captain Johansson, conning the ship himself now with his mate at the weather helm, listened for the ghastly sound of breaking spars, splintered masts, rending hatches. He knew well that any of these sounds could mean one thing—the end of the ship, and his life, and every one's. Nothing could be done about it—nothing save to wait for the dawn, and hope that it might come to find them not yet launched into eternity.

They waited on, with the mate going to peer into the sea-filled main deck to see whether the hatches still showed clear above the water, coming back to report the flying bridge washed away and the poop companions twisted into matchwood. What other damage there might be on deck he did not know. . . .

But in the morning the worst of the storm had gone, and the ship still ran on with two of her three tops'ls holding and the seas, driving constantly over the main deck, with something of their force gone from them. They found the decks gutted of everything movable—everything that could be washed away had gone, including the pigsty and the ship's pigs, and the midships house and all its belongings.

But the rigging still held and there was no water in the hold. The ship had suffered no vital damage. Nothing but the gutted decks, and the flying bridge and poop companions gone overboard.

They straightened her up and she sailed on.

Eighty days later.

The four-masted barque *Melbourne,* scupper-deep with grain, was come to her landfall on the coast of Ireland and in the charthouse on the poop Captain Johansson and his mate discussed cheerfully the chances of getting into port on the morrow. It was a black night, with rain; yet the visibility was not bad and the wind had no Cape Horn scream in it. Sullenly black streams of water poked cold fingers across and across the main deck, but mariners who had made a winter rounding of the Horn could laugh at the menace of an Atlantic storm and scorn the help of lifelines against such seas as the Western Ocean could send aboard. The wind was fair; they had shortened her down in order to be off Queenstown Heads at daylight, when they might take the pilot aboard and stand in. It was no use to come in by night, when orders might be waiting outside and they should go needlessly to anchorage. Anchorages cost money, in port dues, pilotage, fresh food for the crew (not much of that) and the like; and the owner frowned upon unnecessary expenditure.

From time to time the lookout on the focs'l head struck bells—one, two, or three—indicating that the lights of steamers were showing. At first the crew had jumped at each striking of the bells, eager to see even a steamer when they had seen nothing for so long; but long before midnight the last of the watch below had turned in for an hour or two's rest and the lookout was left to keep his watch by himself. The sidelights burned brightly in their towers by the break of the focs'l head; aloft, the black shapes of the tops'ls and the fores'l strained at yard and sheet while the ship champed quietly on. She was making perhaps five knots, perhaps six—no more. The stars were hidden and the prospects of making port with dry sails to stow were not good: no matter, they would be happy enough to make port under any conditions.

So midnight found them, with both watches mustered out for the customary changing of the watches. The starboard watch, going below, glanced sleepily at the lights of some steamer away before them, apparently making to cross their bows. They were not interested. There would be steamers enough on the morrow—and work enough, too. Better to sleep while they had the chance rather than to waste precious hours idly watching the lights of a steamer. They turned in.

The lookout briskly paced across and across on the narrow area of the focs'l head, walking the sleep out of his eyes and thinking of the letters that waited for

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

him in port—port they had been so long in reaching and to which they were now so close. It had not been too bad a voyage—nothing outstanding, apart from that heavy blow on the wrong side of the Horn. They were lucky to get out of that with no vital damage. The deck damage they had suffered was not serious, and most of it was long since repaired.

He looked up. That steamer was coming pretty close. Couldn't he see where he was going? Had he not seen the sailer's lights? Of course he had. . . . No need to worry. Clear night, just off the land, steamer and sailing ship meeting. The steamer must give way, the sailer hold her course and go on.

The *Melbourne* held her course.

Aft in the charthouse Captain Johansson talked with the mate while the third mate kept watch on the poop, all of them thinking of the anchorage they were coming to on the morrow. The third mate was to go home to be married; the mate expected news of an heir. Captain Johansson meant that this anchorage would be his last and he would go to sea no more. . . .

That steamer *was* coming close! Were they crazy? God, couldn't they see?

The lookout yelled along the decks; the third mate ran into the charthouse for a foghorn to blow to warn the steamer away. . . . No danger yet, of course; even if she held her course the steamer ought not to collide with them. . . . The foghorn would not work.

Now they could hear clearly, above the sighing of the wind and the swirling sea, the monotonous fatal grinding of the steamer's engines as she came on, holding steadily to her course, her great black bows reared terrifyingly into the sky above them, right upon them! With the entire North Atlantic ocean at her disposal, the steamer held doggedly to the course which must dangerously cross the oncoming sailer's bows. The lookout yelled. The third mate yelled. The watch on deck roared at the top of their lungs. . . . No notice! No move! Onwards the steamer came.

A deckboy ran along to the focs'l to wake the slumbering watch; the second mate, not yet turned in from his relief, heard the commotion and came on deck in his shirt. . . . The deckboy never reached the focs'l. Before he was halfway along the deck he paused in terror to watch the steamer, now towering into the night right over him, swing not *away* from the *Melbourne* but into her! He heard shouts, a frightened scream, an escape of oil somewhere, the thrashing of the propeller. . . . And then the murdering bows of the steamer were upon him, grinding, roaring, splitting, tearing into the *Melbourne's* sides!

She was struck a terrific blow for'ard, by the break of the focs'l head, and instantly began to heel dangerously over. She was laden deep with heavy grain, and the blow was fatal. The steamer, her decks now a tumult of noise, stood for a moment like a murderer over the scene of her crime, and then fell away from the sailing ship a little. On the poop Captain Johansson and his mate stared horrified at the disaster that had overcome them. The boats? No use! No time!

There was no time for boats. They were lashed down, anyway. . . . There was no time for anything, no time to pray. Now drunkenly the *Melbourne* reeled in her death throes, lying farther and farther on her stricken side with the black shape of the steamer ghostlike before her. While her sails aloft still gave her way in the night breeze, the *Melbourne* began to settle in the water with that ominous lifelessness of the dying ship. . . .

"For'ard for your lives! Jump for the other ship! . . . The only chance!" roared Captain Johansson.

He leapt from the poop on to the reeling main deck. The poop companions were gone, and leaping was the only way. The lurching of the ship threw him from his balance and he landed on his side, breaking both his legs as he fell.

The mate and the third mate ran to him, the steward and the second mate, alarmed from their cabins, following.

"I am finished," he said. "Leave me, for God's sake, and run for'ard to jump to the steamer for your lives!"

But they would not leave him, and did not leave him, and as the *Melbourne* sank her rigging collapsed on her: and so they died. . . .

One minute and a half from the time she was struck, the ship had gone with her officers and half of her boy-crew to their last resting place beneath the waves.

Two days later, into Falmouth Bay an oil tanker came, an oil tanker with twisted bows and ensign at half-mast. She had the survivors from the *Melbourne* aboard, fished out of the sea, and on her bridge a gray old man, with twenty-seven years in command behind him, thought bitterly of the disaster his ship had caused. A quiet old man with tears in his eyes, he loved sailing ships and had been in command of three of them.

And now he was in from the murder of one of them, and all her officers and half her crew.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

No Taxes to Pay

TAX EXEMPTIONS — WHAT THEY ARE — HOW THEY AFFECT EVERYBODY'S POCKETBOOK

By Henry Hazlitt

Last spring, after an excited political debate, Congress "balanced" the budget, and a great sigh of relief was heaved by nearly everybody from the President down. Unfortunately, as a result of some slight miscalculations by the Treasury Department of the yield of the new taxes, the deficit has continued to pile up in the current fiscal year at the rate of $160,000,000 a month. For the first four months it has reached $650,000,000, an amount which, a few years before the War, represented the total annual expenditures of the Federal Government. So the problem of balancing the budget is laid once more on Congress's doorstep. Nor will the revenue-expenditure problem confront the Federal Government alone. Throughout the country one city after another has come to the end of its financial rope; if it is not actually, like Chicago, unable to pay its current bills, it finds that it has reached the end of its borrowing capacity, that its expenses have not fallen, and that its revenues have been melting away. The real need, of course, both federally and in the States and cities, is to cut expenditures drastically; but while every politician honors this aim with the appropriate lip-service, almost none has the courage to suggest specifically where, and at just whose expense, this reduction is to be made. So the point of attack is shifted to the side of taxation, and here the problem becomes that of deciding whether those already shouldering the burden of taxation should be saddled with a still heavier load, or whether—changing the image—it would not be better if a few of the fish who now slip through the meshes of the tax net were caught. Let us look at the problem of tax exemption first as it affects the cities.

One of the first things we are taught in school about the American government is that it is founded on the complete separation of Church and State, and nearly all of us grow up believing in that separation completely. Yet the churches of the United States, and their property, are exempt from taxes. They receive, in other words, the services of sewage systems, pavement and street upkeep and cleaning, and the services of the fire and the police departments, without contributing anything to the support of these services. This is but another way of saying that the share of the churches is paid by the other taxpayers. And this, in turn, is but a way of saying that the churches are being subsidized by the government, and that every taxpayer has to contribute to their support regardless of his own religious beliefs or his lack of them.

Religion, in other words, is to this extent officially recognized and endowed by the State. In New York City this endowment amounts, in effect, to nearly $700,000 a year for Trinity Church and its cemetery; to nearly $60,000 a year for the Jewish Theological Seminary of Rabbi Isaac Elchanon; to $135,000 a year for St. Thomas's Church, and to $400,000 a year for St. Patrick's Cathedral. Altogether New York City donates more than $10,000,000 a year in tax exemption to religious institutions.

And this arrangement has the overwhelming support, or at least acquiescence, of public opinion. A few professional atheists and free-thinkers protest against it, but their protests are regarded, even by most other nonreligious persons, as academic and slightly ridiculous. Nonetheless, when we examine the matter closely it would appear that we are supporting some rather strange principles of subsidy. We are, of course, compelling those of our citizens who do not adhere to any religion, who may even believe that religion is essentially superstition, nevertheless to contribute to its support. But we are doing much more than this. We are compelling our Catholic citizens to contribute to the support of Jewish synagogues; we are compelling Jews to contribute to the support of Baptist churches; we are compelling Baptists to contribute to the support of Christian Scientists.

And how is the amount of this support determined? Let us suppose that the subsidy to the churches, instead of being made in the present left-handed manner, were made directly. In other words, let us suppose that church property were asked to pay the same tax in proportion to its value as other property, and that the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

local city government were then to fix upon a definite subsidy to be paid to the churches. Would this be fixed in accordance with the relative services that each church performs for the State? Would it be fixed in proportion to the number of communicants? Or would it be fixed in proportion to the wealth of the church—the more expensive the church, the bigger the subsidy? The last principle would seem to be the most unfair of all; but that is the principle on which, actually, the subsidy is granted by tax exemption.

Much more dubious is the tax exemption granted to lodges and the property of fraternal orders like the Masons, Elks, Moose, Odd Fellows, and Eagles, not to overlook the American Legion. The exemption, it is true, is not complete; it is not supposed to apply to that part of the property of these organizations that is used for a clearly commercial purpose. Yet every exemption of this sort of course increases the tax burden of those not exempt. The tax exemption granted to hospitals, to homes for the poor, and to many other directly charitable organizations, has a much clearer justification. Many of these institutions perform services which, if they did not perform them, would have to be taken care of by the State in any case.

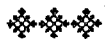
A curious situation arises in the tax exemption of government property itself. It is, of course, perfectly justifiable for a city not to tax its own property. The only possible objection to this type of exemption is an indirect one. It occurs when a city is operating, say, a subway or an electric-light plant in competition with a private plant and figures its costs without making any allowance for taxation. This, of course, is merely a bookkeeping difficulty and can be easily straightened out. But a more complex situation occurs when there is a great deal of tax-exempt Federal or State property in a city. This may sometimes bring added business to the city and—if part of it is a handsome postoffice, for example—may sometimes be a cause for local pride. But a large amount of Federal or State property in a city may bring no equivalent local benefit—it may even, if it happens, let us say, to consist of a Federal or State prison, damage business and property values. As a result the taxpayers of that city will, in effect, be contributing more than their proportionate share to the upkeep of the Federal or State Government.

Perhaps the chief reason that this whole matter of local tax exemption has hitherto attracted so little real attention is that it has been until recently comparatively small. Up to 1920, for example, the tax-exempt real estate throughout the United States was not more than 10 per cent of the total. But recently the seriousness of the problem has been growing, and one of the most striking examples of that seriousness can be found in the situation in New York City. In 1930 the value of New York City real estate was assessed at a total of just under $20,000,000,000, and of this more than $5,000,000,000 was tax exempt. Of this tax-exempt property, $3,345,000,000 was government-owned; $913,000,000 represented new buildings put up under the post-war State housing law, and of the $860,000,000 of other privately owned tax-exempt property remaining, $419,000,000 was religious property and $37,000,000 was the property of fraternal and benevolent organizations. The expiration since 1930 of the exemption of new buildings under the State housing law has still not greatly improved matters. Though the city's total tentative 1933 assessments have been reduced to $18,225,000,000, there has been an increase of $313,000,000 in exempt government-owned property, and of $102,000,000 in exempt privately owned property apart from new housing, with the result that the amount of tax-exempt property in New York City is still more than 25 per cent of the total. In the State of New York as a whole $6,700,000,000 in real estate is tax exempt.

It is important to stress the extent of this local tax exemption, for local taxes—practically all of which are levied on real estate—are equal to state and federal taxes combined. But the tax exemptions under federal laws are even more remarkable in some respects than the local exemptions. The Federal Government, for example, begins by exempting from income taxation the same type of institutions that most of the states exempt from property taxation. Thus the federal revenue law and the laws of many of the states exempt from the income tax labor and agricultural organizations, fraternal orders operating under the lodge system, corporations, funds or foundations organized for "religious, charitable, scientific, literary, or educational purposes, or for the prevention of cruelty to children or animals," farmers' co-operatives, and many other types of organization. We also exempt from taxation that part of an individual's income—provided it does not exceed 15 per cent of the total—that he gives to various religious and charitable organizations. This becomes, of course, a powerful fund-raising argument on the part of these organizations. An individual in the highest income brackets is called upon to pay up to 63 per cent of his income in federal taxes and perhaps an additional amount in state taxes. In New York State, for instance, this additional tax amounts to 6 per cent, which means that the individual in the highest brackets pays up to 69 per cent of his income in taxes. The various charitable organizations, in appealing for funds, can therefore point out to this individual that for every $100 he gives them he is really only giving away a net amount—to him—of $31, because taxes would take the other $69 in any case.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Among exemptions in the federal field, however, most attention has been directed to the tax-exempt bond. Professor E. M. Patterson, in a recent article in *The New Republic,* has sought to show that the effect of the tax-exempt bond as a source of tax evasion has been greatly exaggerated. On December 31, 1930, the total outstanding issues of federal, state, and local bonds, including those wholly exempt from the normal income tax and surtax of the Federal Government and those exempt only from a normal income tax, were $32,803,000,000. Professor Patterson proceeds to show that these bonds have largely gravitated into the hands of insurance, surety and bonding corporations, banks and trust companies, business corporations and charitable institutions rather than into the hands of wealthy individuals. The Federal Trade Commission in 1924 estimated that at the end of 1922 there were $31,921,000,000 wholly and partially tax-exempt securities outstanding, of which only $4,450,000,000 were owned by individuals whose taxable incomes exceeded $10,000. From 1922 to 1929, inclusive, estates subject to the federal estate tax showed a very low proportion of holdings of tax exempt securities. The highest average percentage shown in any year was 8.68 per cent in 1925.



These figures are enough to show that, up to the present, the tax-exempt bond has not become a real menace to our income tax system. They do not prove, however, that it will not become a real menace in the future, and they do not prove that it is not vicious in principle. Why, we may ask, have not wealthy individuals bought tax-exempt bonds in the quantities we might expect them to? The answer is not a simple one. The purchase of federal, state, and municipal bonds is virtually compulsory with many types of institutions, and these absorb them almost automatically. Other institutions invest in such bonds merely because they are moved by conservatism, and state and federal bonds seem to them the safest of all securities. The wealthy American, on the other hand, usually derives his wealth from some particular line of business or industry with which he and his family have been associated for years. As he draws more profits from that industry, he tends to put them back into it in order to draw out still more profits. His ownership is either direct or represented largely in common stock. His rate of return on his investment, even on his new investment, was until recently very large. He is connected with his business sentimentally. And his temperament and environment make him nearly always an inveterate gambler.

That is why he had not, up to 1929, put his money largely into tax-exempt securities. But will this situation continue indefinitely? The period of high tax-exempt bond issues and of high income taxes correspond, up to 1929, with the "new era," the era of huge and often fantastic industrial profits; the era in which common stocks, in the course of a decade, could increase 1000 per cent or more in their market values. Certainly there seemed little incentive, while this was going on, to put one's money in tax-exempt bonds, the return on which was comparatively very low, and the capital value of which did not increase at all. But what may happen now that the situation has reversed itself?—now that the rich have seen their industrial profits turn to heavy deficits, now that they have seen their common stocks melt away on the average to one-fifth of their value in 1929, while the only securities that have held their value have been United States Government bonds, and while income tax rates have returned to their war-time levels? Can all this occur without profoundly altering the mental habits of the wealthy Americans? There are probably very few among them now who do not wish that they had had their money in Government bonds—for the sake of safety of principal alone. And their regret would deepen if many of them made a cold calculation—which the "economic man" does not always do—of the real return that a tax-exempt bond would have yielded them. Under present federal income tax rates, individuals with incomes over $100,000 receive from a 4 per cent tax-exempt security the equivalent of a return of 9 to 11 per cent on a taxable security, depending on the size of their incomes; on a 5 per cent exempt security they receive the equivalent of 11 to 13½ per cent.

Whatever may be said of the comparative harmlessness of the tax-exempt bond up to the present, it remains vicious in principle, and always a potential threat to our tax structure. Even if it were true at present that the government saved more in interest charges by making its bonds tax exempt than it lost in taxes by the same act, the tax-exempt bond could still be defended only from the narrow standpoint of government fiscal policy, and not from the broader standpoint of general social policy. For the tax-exempt bond offers immunity precisely to those "unearned incomes" that ought to pay, and in Great Britain do pay, a higher rate than "earned" incomes. And even from the narrow fiscal standpoint the case of the tax-exempt bond is far from established. For almost no individual or institution buys a tax-exempt bond for its tax-exempt feature alone, unless it believes that it will thereby save in taxes more than it loses by accepting a lower interest because of the tax-exemption. And if its calculations prove to be correct, then the government is losing on net balance exactly what the holders of the bonds are gaining on net balance. (Actually this total governmental loss is being shifted from the state and local governments to the Federal Government.)

24507

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

We come finally to the most wide-spread example of tax exemption—the federal and state income taxes on individuals. In 1930, the number of persons paying federal income tax was 2,000,000, or hardly more than 1½ per cent of the whole population. Even under the severe new law a married man with two dependents pays nothing on a net income of $3300, and less than 1 per cent on a net income of $4000. Not until his income goes above $25,000 does he pay as much as 10 per cent of it in income tax; from that point on, of course, it is scaled up rapidly until it approaches its maximum, federally, of 63 per cent. Not more than 60,000 persons pay more than 10 per cent of their incomes in federal taxes, and this small group—one person in every 2000—pays four-fifths of the income tax. An even smaller group, made up of those with $50,000 net income or over, numbering about 30,000—or only one in every 4000 of our population—pays nearly three-quarters of our income tax. This hardly seems to bear out the frequent contention that our capitalist government is controlled solely in the interests of the wealthy.

In Great Britain, by contrast, 5 per cent of the population pays income tax; a married man with the equivalent of $5000 net income pays more than six times what he would have to pay in this country. Possibly a fairer comparison of the proportion of the population paying income tax is not the actual number of income-tax payers but the number of persons income taxes are paid *for*. Assuming that the average income-tax payer in the United States pays for three persons, the percentage of the population directly interested in income tax rates may rise to as high as 5 per cent. But a tax system under which 95 per cent of the population does not pay the federal tax on which chief attention is concentrated is not one that encourages public pressure for federal economy.

I do not intend, because of these figures, to support the paradoxical thesis that in American taxation it is the poor who exploit the rich. It has been calculated, for one thing, that the highest 5 per cent of income receivers in the United States receive one-fourth of the entire national income; and, wholly aside from broader considerations, it would not pay the government purely from a fiscal and administrative standpoint to extend the income-tax "base" very greatly. Moreover, if most politicians publicly support the poor against the rich in drawing up income-tax rates, because they know where their votes come from, privately their actions may favor the rich against the poor, because they know where their campaign contributions come from. This type of favoritism may make itself felt in various ways. For example, in the cities, even if the rich individual or corporation cannot manage to secure a specially low assessment in return either for a direct bribe or a campaign donation or because he has a friend in politics, he can at least afford to hire lawyers and experts to contest his tax assessment and to get it reduced.

Tax favoritism is, of course, one of the means by which the great city political machines maintain themselves in power. In Chicago the assessments are notoriously inequitable. *The New York World-Telegram* published on October 10 last the results of a survey of 193 pieces of property in New York City which had been sold, appraised or mortgaged since July 1. It found that 106 pieces of property sold or appraised for a total of $15,726,471 had been assessed at $20,836,000; while, on the other hand, 83 properties with a market value according to actual sales or appraisals of at least $12,995,049 were assessed at only $9,159,700. It found, as might be expected, that extreme cases of over-assessment by the city were largely among small properties. Assuming that its samples were representative, it concluded that owners of 43,000 Manhattan properties will pay $40,000,000 taxes next year that should be met by owners of 34,000 under-assessed properties.

These figures, it is true, take us out of the field of exemption and favoritism intended and created by the law itself. But they are enough to indicate that the unfavored taxpayer must help to support, in addition to those whom the law intentionally excuses, those who escape their just burden through lax administration or downright corruption. During the new era we did not worry very much about what such luxuries were costing us. We were rich; what did we care about a few hangers-on? Weren't the Elks and the Odd Fellows doing good? What did we want to tax their property for? But now that our wealth and income have shrunk appallingly, while taxes remain either where they were or higher, it may begin to occur to us that the farmers, for example, which we tax very heavily, are, to put it no more strongly, at least as necessary to the welfare of the United States as the Odd Fellows or even the American Legion. It may even occur to us that, every time we exempt somebody from taxation, we are putting an added burden on everybody else. It is time to take a look at the privileged. It is time to examine the army of the tax parasites. It is time to ask a few of these strong men, dressed up as dear old ladies, to carry their own bundles.

Are Government bureaus as bad as painted? "A Case for the Bureaucracy" by Charles A. Beard, author of "The Rise of American Civilization" and "The American Leviathan," is an authoritative survey showing what taxpayers really get for their money.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Next Political Front

By William Harlan Hale

The author of "Address to the Young Men" (August SCRIBNER'S*) surveys the results of the elections in their relation to the participation of young men and women in politics and social action.*

AROUSED to an interest in the crucial political scene of 1932, the young men answered the challenges thrown at them—answered with mountains of words. They replied not just to the particular Address published in SCRIBNER'S, but to a hundred other appeals, summonses, and calls to arms. The weeks before the election were heavy with letters of youthful protest, pronouncements of imminent change, plans for Third Parties, demands for Socialism, denunciations of "the system." They gave the impression of representing all American young people. Some correspondents, poetically inclined, suggested a "League of Youth." Some came forth to "plead for revolution," as one might plead for a change of linen—gently but firmly.

On one point all the essayists, tractarians, and correspondents were agreed, namely, that there must be political action on the part of young people. That is why they wrote. On another point they were all agreed, namely, that there must be leaders. That is what they dreamed. There was little doubt that action would occur, or that leaders would arise. And so we went on, writing and dreaming.

The election came, and the clean sweep of the national jobholders' slate. A colossal protest vote threw the Benevolent and Protective-Tariff Order of Republicans out on the sidewalk. Every one agreed that it was a landslide. Many regarded it as a major revolution in American politics. Revolution indeed! Did the young people help achieve it? How about all those countless votes that were to be cast for Thomas and Foster? How about the promises for a militant leftward swing? What happened to our awakening youth, when it got to the polls? The boy, oh, where was he?

The boy, it seems, was not in evidence. Or he was hopelessly drowned in the Roosevelt tide. The radical was not in evidence. The two million votes which even *The Literary Digest* prophesied for Thomas turned out to be about 800,000. "Great rush to the Socialist camp"—with 800,000 votes, when twelve years ago Debs had won just short of a million! In 1928, when chickens were in their pots, cars in their garages, and God in his Heaven, the Communists won 48,770 votes. In 1932, when there were two chickens in every garage, and nothing more, the Communists polled around 75,000 votes. And in 1932 there were 13,000,000 unemployed in the bargain. Certainly half of them had the chance to use the ballot. Apparently they forgot, at the crucial time, to realize that they were Marx's revolutionary proletariat. Apparently they had not heard of Comrade Foster. And, even knowing that they had their last nickel in their jeans, they did not so much as rally around Brother Thomas. Rather, they voted to bring Mr. Young and Mr. Baruch to Washington. Or they did not vote at all. They did not give a damn.

We might as well face the fact. The crisis of capitalism did almost nothing, in America, to strengthen the radical front. The electoral contest, melancholy, quibbling, inept, exhibited one strange resisting strength: it plucked the hopeful feathers out of the Left Wing, and let it go fluttering helplessly into the morass.

How does this bear on the voting of the young men? It means that the force of conservative adherence was far more profound than we imagined. Hoover's frantic attempt to identify Mr. Roosevelt with Stalin must have scared some of our virgin voters into abject G. O. P. obedience. Many others went to the polls undoubtedly thinking that they were performing an act of radical daring by pulling the lever for Friendly Franklin. Out of the 1,200,000 young people who have graduated from college in the last five years—and who have suffered almost the chief burden of joblessness—probably less than 50,000 voted even for the mild Mr. Thomas.

Perhaps the facts of the election and the chagrin of the radical spokesmen of youth will lead us out of the oratory stage and into a stage of dealing with reality. First of all, we realize that the Third Party notion has suffered a staggering blow. We can no longer go on declaring that all we have to do is to rally around the Socialist or the Communist banners, and that the vast masses of young people will automatically follow

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

us. They did not follow us. They show no intention of following. We wrote Addresses and scribbled replies, and they did not get inspired. Let us confess, in all humility, that we had nothing with which to back our words. In our calls for action, organization, effectiveness, we did not know by what means, or from what quarter, such things were to be obtained. We do not know now. But perhaps we are learning.

A general study of young American minds reveals three basic political attitudes. We can start off best if we summarize and compare them.

There are your "regular fellows," your die-hards, your eternally conservative sons of conservative fathers. They have been fed on the pap of rugged individualism, and they still swear by the slogan "Keep government out of business." They have inherited the general ideas of progress, uplift, and "service," which motivated Rotary (until Mencken bomb-shelled it). They want criticism to be "constructive" (that is to say, they want no criticism at all). If you remark on the sorry mess capitalism is in, they brand you as a misfit, a defeatist, a "parlor pink." They tend to associate radicalism with bad morals: there is something venal and salacious about it. They still live on the belief that a hundred business men, all scrapping, competing, and cutting each others' throats—but each "free" and "individual"—will accomplish far more ultimate good than a hundred business men working in a co-ordinated unit. They believe this even if they are out of jobs themselves. Many of them, of course, are not out of jobs, but constitute the successful-young-business-man group, with college five or ten years behind them. You know their cant and their complaisance. You have heard them everywhere; for their quality is that of an echo. You know that they are a class, not in American society, but in American mentality. And you know that to get any enthusiasm for a new day in politics and economy out of them is about as possible as getting enthusiasm for James Joyce out of a teacher at Southern Methodist University.

The second mental sector of our younger population is that which tends to find sympathy with the ideas which spring out of the present, rather than with those which spring out of the past. It is the sector that five years ago cared perhaps not at all for politics, and now finds itself reading the newspapers with widely opened eyes. It is the region from which the vague desires for young people's political action come. Now, these newer ideas in the air are the paired conceptions of a planned economy and of an international community. The notion of Planning was dramatically presented about a year and a half ago when every economist worth his statistical salt formulated his particular brand of utopia; and even when the fad blew over, the distant inspiration of Russia's Five-Year Plan remained, and awareness to our national needs became more acute. The idea of a national economy is a loose one. Of course, it involves basically the establishment of a Supreme Economic Council, or of some other technological, forecasting, and central scheduling body; but the scheme can be interpreted from a Fascist as well as from a Communist point of view. Young people still see the conception with great vagueness; but they are conscious of the interior features which it entails—such as the re-planning of housing, the introduction of unemployment insurance, the increased protection of consumers' interest, the new organism of government ownership. They recognize these projects in all degrees of radicalism; but they recognize them. And they couple them with the external idea of internationalism, which naturally involves the nearer problems of debt revision, monetary co-operation, disarmament, and the lowering of tariff barriers. We might say that for the nineteenth-century ideal of Liberty they have substituted the twentieth-century ideal of Order. Most of them regard this ideal not just as a philosophical dream; they want it to materialize. Many suspect that it can be attained merely through the use of the ballot. But as to means and tactics, they are sorely at a loss.

The third group is the one that scorns these politically conscious young liberals just as much as it does the young conservatives. It is the Society of the Extreme Left. It is the emphatic group that has subscribed to the principles of active revolution. And one of its main principles is to consort with no one who wishes that revolution to be bloodless. These men want all or nothing. And to prove the fatuity of compromise, of mere progressivism, they fling into your face a copy of the ancient liberal bible, *The Nation*. They sneer at the "pinks," with their utopian hopes and their lack of stamina.

The thought of the young conservatives was concerned with the ruling class; that of the liberals and broader Socialists with all classes; that of the extreme Left is concerned with the working class alone. It is only the latter group who abide by the word "class" at all. They are constantly surrounded by visions of a "proletariat," a "petty bourgeois" class, and half-a-dozen other carefully defined classes, each with its "class ideology," "class morality," and "class art." They see nothing but walls and divisions. A change in your economic position changes your class—and thus makes you an entirely different person. Some of the more literary of the group criticise each new work of art on the basis of the particular class which it champions; if it does not champion the proletarian class they throw it out as worthless. In other words, there is no basic thing in the world except the amount of your salary: all art, thought, and life, are a function of your class status. Environment is everything: the individual nothing.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

It is this third and last group that concerns us most intimately here. What are its prospects in the American mind? What allegiance is youth going to declare to it? Needless to say, the virtual invisibility of the Communist vote in November gives a quick answer. But perhaps not a fair answer. Are the 1932 figures only a delusion, and are young people, say in 1936, going to rush from the big parties through progressivism, planning, and third parties, right into full communism?

In the first place, all Communist appeal must be made on the argument of classes. Where, in America, are the classes? Is it true that our "overbuilt" capitalist and industrial system is creating a larger and larger class of unpropertied workers, who have no interest in the scheme, and who as proletariat are utterly at variance with it? Actually, it seems that, on the other hand, our system converts more and more people from the laboring and rural classes into the white-collar class —into clerks, salesmen, and all the hundred varieties of office workers who do the jobs that machinery can never supplant. These are the despised "petty bourgeoisie"; these are the prime enemies of Marx. And even when a time such as this throws millions out of jobs and deprives them of every economic chance, the vast jobless majority adhere to the standard American gospel of success, of the eventual motor-car, Wayside Cottage, and admission into the respectable world pictured in the advertisements. They are more profoundly influenced by this classic American belief in thrift and reward than they are by the great preaching of "Workers of the world unite! You have everything to gain, and nothing to lose but your chains!" Just where are your class margins in America? Can you define your proletariat?

The American Marxian has a hard time refuting the fact that while the Master prophesied communism as the inevitable result of an over-developed industrial capitalism, the only nation that has gone communist so far is the one that was under-developed, non-industrial, and feudal. It is hard to disprove the assertion that communism as a social force is weakest just in the most highly advanced empires of capitalism: England and America.

Edmund Burke spoke of "that fierce spirit of liberty" which prevailed among the American colonists. And while we are pretty well agreed that the old doctrine of American individualism is now ragged rather than rugged, we are still doubtful whether the idea of social regimentation can be forced upon us. We cannot, for instance, imagine this country subscribing to the German worship of uniforms, sword-rattling, sub-officials, and Hitlers. We can barely imagine it submitting to the rule of a clique of Fascisti, and letting its most private destinies be shaped by one omnipotence. Just so, we can barely imagine it going over to a society ruled by an oligarchy of working-class commanders, self-denying, mystical, fanatical, Early-Christian. It is not that we are better, or further advanced; certainly, our methods of rule are backward indeed when compared, say, to the administration of Germany. But if there is something deep in the national temper that removes it from the mentalities of the Continent, there is something that removes it far more distantly from the mentality of Russia—which is not even Continental, but almost Oriental. Communism, a great ideal for bringing Russia out of its mediævalism and its darkness, seems remote from the natural demands of a people living in a thoroughly modern, technical, luxury-conscious society. This American society is going to work out its destiny in accordance with an American interplay of freedom and restraints. The one necessary ingredient in the formula for practical communism is Russia.

The young conservatives will not help us; it is the great middle sector of youth which—slowly and cautiously moving leftward—offers the most hope for the political future. This mass is in harmony with the most rational and realistic ideas arising out of the economic forces of a post-war world; but the great thing that it lacks is the method of making those ideas real.

Now at this point the main thing for us is not the theories and the specific policies, but it is the men and the first winning of influence. Theories tend to be the property of third parties. The League for Independent Political Action, for instance, last year framed an elaborate national platform which covered every topic from unemployment relief to the Negro problem and the Marine-in-Nicaragua problem. It was interesting theory; but no one ever suggested the notion of putting it into practice. Other groups gave out similar broadcasts: they were intelligent, and they were ineffectual.

It is not necessary that the young people of progressive leaning make up their minds as to exactly what degree of change they hope to effect; they need not argue out subtle differences in programme or tendency. For the continued quarrelling among separated cliques on problems of theory and philosophy has prevented them from ever making common cause and putting their passion into deed. A little intellectual compromise at this point will hurt none of us—unless we prefer to seek a strictly private utopia. An attempt to ignore gradations of radicalism, and to seek common denominators, is the essential to concerted action.

And it will be best if we can overcome our distaste for the old parties to such an extent that we actually work within those parties. Yes, here it is: the old argument of "boring from within." It was laughed out of court, last summer. Now, when we see the blank failure of the theory-ridden third parties, it does not seem

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

so silly. The policy of working toward a radical movement by beginning within the old parties has two distinct advantages:

1. Immediate practical contact with politics: activity among the "fall-in-line" electorate.

2. Achievement of influence and success in local politics first: working up from the bottom.

In other words, we start not with perfectionist theories and the full blue-prints of a new nation in our pockets, but we start in the hard realm of practical considerations, trying this reform here, finding that man there, and eventually gathering our local forces into national ones.

Both Republican and Democratic parties are aching for a liberal wing. President Butler's warning was just: either the G. O. P. finds itself some young leaders, or it passes out of the picture. The Democrats themselves, with their preference for oratorical liberals like Mr. Wilson and Mr. Roosevelt (who can be counted upon to go conservative in a show-down)—need a young liberal wing if they are to keep away from the Old Men status. Let us not just give these parties a liberal wing; let us give them a Left wing—a wing of young men drawn from here and there, accumulating, first unfelt, then troublesome, then militant.

We can work only through local politics. We have got to throw such local influence as we can muster toward this specific minor candidate or that one. Here and there we can slip a man into office right away, before people know what's going on. Obviously we must champion men who look as though they had ability and guts and vision; and who are after other things than the usual slice of the political pie. Probably we shall start by being fooled: we may find we have helped a dunderhead, when we thought we had found a leader. But we need not quibble over exact degrees of radicalism. In one district we might build up an organization to instate a Socialist representative; in another we might hit upon an honest-to-God progressive Republican; in another it might be best to back a lively Democratic ticket. We would be seeking one thing, and that thing is the election of the candidate whom we support.

What do we get in exchange? Well, we try to get what every backer wants. Favors. Our chance would lie in our preference for social, public, progressive favors over personal and *sub rosa* ones. As we grow in influence and cohesion, we can make a candidate promise in advance to fight for a whole panel of specific measures, in return for our support. Yes, we can still be young Republicans, young Democrats, young Socialists. We can be anything, just so long as we face this reality: we must work for men—candidates—elections—specific victories. We are contesting with experts at the political game, and we have got to be something like politicians. Otherwise we go on beating the air.

What would be the details of organization, first within the older party frames? Everything, of course, depends on the active independent political worker. He is hard to find, and even harder to keep going. The first essential is loose groups whose purpose is to establish contacts, find men, talk over prospects. Casually formed clubs have "worked," and will. Luncheons, tables, a drink—these start things off. Remember the Jacobins. And then it is not hard to follow a formula such as this one, suggested by John Carter (who recently formed a progressive group called the "New National Party").

1. Form a local voluntary organizing committee.
2. Get local members—by discussions and arguments.
3. Hold a meeting and appoint a definite committee.
4. Register all voters in your organization.
5. Have a meeting and decide which candidate you can support effectively and which you can oppose.
6. Announce your policy in regard to candidates.
7. Vote and take credit for the results.

Outside of the house-to-house work and regular campaigning which young men must learn from the old precinct politicians, the main method of winning popular support should be propaganda by press. A newspaper fit for young Americans to read and follow must be established; local newspapers fed by it, would be ideal. There has got to be a central organ—a reliable, lively, editorially effective daily paper (not just a *Nation*). The problem of founding and financing it is the most baffling, complex thing in the entire early stage of the movement. Let the minds assemble!

When once the insurgent front has reached national status, and when men in House and Senate are acutely conscious of the backing which organizations of young people have given them, then comes the time for broader action. A compact number of Left-wing Republicans and Democrats in the House could, under normal conditions, form an effective bloc—a cross-party group which might come to hold the balance of power. The men in this group would have to be leaders unafraid to graduate from strict partisan alignments. They could do more than the present feeble Progressives in the Senate, who are without real backing and concerted force. The men supported by youth—and eventually elected by youth—would be representatives of an interest more than regional, more than partisan, more than sentimental. In a very real sense, they would be representatives of a young, new nation—that is, of a new national party. And the big question before them and before us—as the powers of young America finally assembled—would be this: when to break off from all the old ties, and actually to form such a party.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Trap

A STORY

By Meridel LeSueur

It was really frightening to go out doors with that raw spring wind blowing up from the river. Mrs. Darling stood at the side door of her house peeking out, her bare arms across her breast, and she could feel the chill go right through her. A bright, wide, pale sky shone above and the rather wild country around was black and wet-looking. It was two lots to another house, and nothing at all stood between Mrs. Darling's house and the river bluffs. She peeked across the river chasm at the view. It really rather frightened her, but the doctor did think the view so fine.

After a good dinner with his friends he would stand at the window overlooking the valley with the lights twinkling below them in the dark abyss and the cliff rising a sheer bank of darkness and terror on the other side of the river, and he would light his cigar or his pipe and throw out his chest a little and balance himself on his toes and say with a sweep of his hand, "See what a view!" "What a view!" all the guests would say, peeking out the window, and at such times she herself would sing out, "Isn't it a wonderful view? Oh, we do enjoy it so much."

And then the doctor would turn and look at her as if she too were a splendid view. She was called by all his friends "a splendid woman . . . a splendid wife."

The doctor would be proud of her and glad she hadn't cut her hair, which was piled in a thick knot on her head just as it had been when he had married her, a young girl, and she was so young seeming yet with the body of a young woman, though she had been married twenty years.

It is true that she had had no children. It was frightening having children. She had put it off. "I couldn't be having them and then losing them. I'm afraid of the sorrow," she said to her friends.

"Oh, the Dr. has built another brush-heap trying to catch a thrush," she said to herself peering out the half-open door. She always called her husband the "Dr." even to herself, and to her friends at bridge parties she said, "The Dr. always likes his eggs just three and a half minutes."

There on the ground was a heap of brush. She had been uneasy the evening before when the doctor had been prowling around outside and had come in with black mud on his hands and shoes. "What were you doing?" she had asked uneasily. "Oh, just looking around," he had said, with that irritating vagueness; and later, when she had forgotten about it, he said, "I piled up some old brush outside the window. Maybe a thrush will build a nest there."

Oh, if they had built their house in a good suburb where the houses set close together and one's neighbors were close and one didn't have to see that great raw chasm of the Mississippi all the time, that gash in the golden cliffs, in winter so awful, so raw and exposed like bleaching bones, and the cliffs like wounds, so that she just kept the curtains pulled down most of the time.

She looked back into the warm darkened house, so snug, such a good house. "Oh, your house, Mrs. Darling, your gorgeous house."—"Yes, the Dr. and I like it."—"And, of course, the view!"—"Oh, yes, a marvellous view."—"What freedom . . . just like the country."—That was pleasant if only there weren't so much light about them, like a great shout. If only there were close houses, women coming and going up and down the steps, overhanging elms; but to be out in this bright light under so broad a sky—it was frightening.

She was always a little afraid even to stay in the house—it was so quiet, so absolutely noiseless. It always seemed that there was some presence just invisible to her. Like a child, she never had got used to being alone in a house. When her friend Sada was there, how nice it was to have a house and an absent, comfortable husband whom one spoke of so pleasantly and remotely as the "Dr."

But the sky was bright and there was something in the wind. Had she better get a scarf, that little woollen one? She hesitated, then she boldly stepped out the door just as she was and stood blinking in the bright light that fell from the broad pale sky, and the wind blew and blew about her. Everything seemed so white, and the wind moved all the stiff grasses and the stiff trees, as if shaking them, and she stood holding her chill arms in her hands and the wind shaking against

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

her too. She walked over to a young tree she and the doctor had planted and gingerly put her hands on it and then wiped the wetness off on her dress with distaste.

She moved her lips, talking gently to herself, as she always did. "Now why does he want to drag that dirty brush into the yard? That's how he got his feet so muddy. What good is it? And birds"—she said in one of her rare moments of candor she had only by herself —"birds will only dirty the walk and the gables. . . ."

She stepped gingerly over the soft new lawn, lifting her high heels so they would not sink into the mud. She did hate so to squash into anything. Her face had a pouting look of displeasure. She gathered her short skirts together around her legs. She always felt herself in a swirl of skirts, and regretted the short mode. To herself she always rose amidst a swirl of skirts, as she did on her marriage-day. She was at the time of her girlhood and would never be in any other.

Just the same, she was going to take a peek into the black thicket of brush the doctor had piled up to catch a thrush—just to see if there could be a thrush there.

She stopped and peered at the little wren-house the doctor had built and put high on a pole to catch a wren. It was tiny and snug against the sky with a little door and little windows just like a human house. "It is cunning," she said, "cunning, so neat and snug, so closed away like a tiny doll's house. It would be snug to live in. . . ." She bent her face upward until the light showered so whitely on her and made her really blind, so that white spots were in her eyes and the grove of trees across the road looked far off and faint, as if they were not real.

Feeling rather dazzled, she tiptoed to the pile of brush and stood peering down. The twigs made a close weave, a jagged black twining, and as she looked she could see deeper into the maze of criss-cross wintry twigs, far in, and she was shivering from the chill wind that kept blowing, exposing her. She thought she saw something far down in the maze, and then, with a start, a terrible fright that almost made her swoon, she realized that a tiny eye was looking up at her from far below, a round, shining black eye looking straight at her. She could not even scream. It was like a nightmare.

Then the eye seemed to roll away into blackness, and then suddenly, without warning, there was a flicking whirr, a quick sound, wings fanned her face, and there was a frightening contact of a black, quick body. She screamed and shielded her face in her hands. The bird winged up into the pale sky, letting out a shrill, scolding cry that struck the heart of the woman standing with her face covered. She began to sob. She didn't know why. A terrible hollow fright was in her. She could not move. She just covered her face in her hands and sobbed—like a child.

The cook came to the door and, seeing her, ran out. "Why, whatever is it?"

She could not say. She stood shaking and sobbing. She wished for her father, but he was long dead. The cook pulled her hands away, and she stood sobbing, her frightened face exposed in the white light, without maturity, dreadfully like the face of a child, as if nothing had touched her for many years.

"It was the bird," she sobbed. "I didn't expect . . ."

The cook led her into the house, wondering. Mrs. Darling could not stop sobbing. She felt exposed. All the exposures of the world welled in her, the fright of her girlhood, the fright of her marriage, all the strange fright and exposure she had suffered. It was too much. She could not bear it. She could not——

She pulled away from the cook and ran upstairs. She lay on the bed, her head buried in the pillow. She clung to the pillow as if it were a human being. She pressed her body against it. She sobbed with such violence, it was madness. She could not stop. The frightening world, the exposure and the terror. It was too much.

She tried to think of something she might get up and do. Oh, it was no use feather-stitching now, or what good was needle-point? What was there to do? What did it all amount to? She could not bear to get up and see out the window and feel her heart beat in that dreadful fright. She wanted to burrow into some dark place. Where was her father? She could always run to him when she was a child—the smell of him, the feel, the blind peace of his breast. Where was he now?

She could not think. She put her face in the pillow so she was blind. She felt it was her father near her, and at last she fell asleep.

II

She woke to the sound of voices and a shattering light falling into the room from the sky without. The sun was shining directly across her bed in that bright way of early spring, so that the mole, like winter eyes, can scarcely bear it. She sprang up suddenly from her sleep and pulled down the blinds. That was Sada downstairs talking to the cook. Oh, good! Sada. Sada.

"Sada, Sada," she called at the stairs, "I'll be down. I'm so glad you've come."

Sada called up in her high singing voice like a young girl's, "Oh, are you sleeping? Heavens, what a lazy one."

"Oh, wait, I'll be down. Wait. Wait." Sada turned on the radio and a waltz came up the stairs. Mrs. Darling's heart sang. It was all right now. She washed her face and powdered it and put on the tiniest speck of rouge. She always felt a little wicked about rouge.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Then she ran down-stairs, imaginary skirts swirling about her, and Sada, with a little cry, ran to the door and they embraced, making little sounds in their throats as if they had not seen each other for years and years, as if they had not played bridge together only the afternoon before. They buried their faces in each other's necks and laughed and sniffed each other and held each other at arm's length and laughed more, a high, meaningless ripple of laughter.

Sada was a well-dressed woman who lived fashionably in an apartment hotel and indulged in illnesses simply out of boredom, as some women might indulge in love-affairs or dime novels. She had a little upturned nose and a very white skin and wide blue eyes. She must have been very pretty as a girl with her frailty and blonde goldness, but the frailty had gone a little stout and the blonde goldness was like a chrysanthemum after the first spring shower, not after a storm, just a light spring rain, one of the first. Her flesh was softening, her neck drying a little, and her eyes, so blue, were now a little washed out and vacant. This she could see in her mirror quite plainly, and her husband also could see it when he looked at her closely.

Neither woman was maturing. It seemed as if they had only been blighted a little by a too strong sun.

They clung together with this peculiar intimacy, as if it was a great relief for them to let down their game in an adult world. They had always this sense of strain and fright, almost of fear, but particularly that sense they never got over of going on a journey with a strange man away from home. It was as if they had simply gone from their father and mother to a husband —just changed hands. And they were constrained, in unfamiliar company. Together they were happy. It was an interlude.

Mrs. Darling pulled Sada to the sofa, and she stooped to poke the fire so it would burn up, turning her eyes back to Sada, listening to her chatter. She looked, crouching there stirring the fire, as if there was a woman power in her, but so unawakened, so slumbering. Perhaps that's what made her frightened sometimes, stop fixing the fire and lift her slumbering breast sharply and turn her eyes in fright and terror back into the snug room—perhaps it was a terror of never being used.

"I was so bored today," Sada was saying, opening her great blue eyes. And they almost filled with tears, because it was such a pity for her, of all people, to be bored. And she could make her eyes fill with tears which moved her husband to almost any lengths.

"Oh"—Mrs. Darling rose and clasped her hands with a naïve kind of ecstasy she had—"Sada, it's wicked to be bored. Think of all the people who haven't even enough to eat. Oh, I like my life. I have the pleasantest time!" She threw back her head with its heavy weight of hair. "Oh, I want to show you something." She went to the table and took out of the Bible an old picture, brown on the edges. "Sada, look, isn't this killing, simply killing?"

The two women sat on the sofa bending over the picture a moment. It was one of Mrs. Darling taken just before her marriage. They turned and looked into each other's eyes a moment solemnly, then they both burst into high hysterical laughter, dropping their heads together, leaning against each other in convulsive laughter.

"My dear, the plume . . ."

"The mutton sleeves . . . did you ever!"

"Imagine a hat like that . . . and the rats! Ohhhhh, dear!"

Mrs. Darling simply laughed until the tears came in her eyes. But she saw that look in the eyes of the girl in the picture, that timid, expectant look, peering out on some mysterious future.

"Isn't that killing. . . ."

"Isn't it simply precious. . . ."

But the head was lifted a little proudly, with an expectant pride, and the breasts were arched in the tight bodice like a pouter pigeon's. Oh, that woman had almost flown out—had almost gone on a voyage—there had been the hope of setting sail, the excitement of a dangerous journey in which all would be risked. That girl had for a moment been looking out toward a strange sea.

"Where *did* you dig this up, Ellen?"

"I found it in an old Bible. It was taken just before the Dr. and I were married . . . really. I think it was just the week before."

They stopped laughing and looked down at the little blackened picture.

"Well, that's a long time. . . ."

"Twenty years."

They were silent. The clock on the mantel seemed just at that moment to begin to tick, and a log fell in the fire, the ash showering out a little.

Mrs. Darling got up and took a little broom and slowly swept the ashes back, making it neat.

Sada went restlessly to the window, her chic, round legs showing beneath the short skirt. "What is this, Ellen?" she cried. Almost anything excited her, so she cried out in that high voice, "That little house on the pole?"

Ellen went to the window and put her arm around the other woman. "That's for wrens. The Dr. built it himself and put it up. He wants to have a lot of birds."

"Is it a trap?" Sada asked.

"Oh, no. We wouldn't trap them, of course. It's just a nice, comfortable house already made for them, you see, and once they get used to the comforts, then they always come back. They get sort of domesticated."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Isn't it cunning," Sada said. "So exactly like a little human house. I should think wrens would simply be delighted to find such a good house."

"Oh, I don't know," Ellen said vaguely, squinting a little as she did when looking any distance. She looked down at the pile of brush, thinking of the black eye that had looked up at her that morning and the frightening whirr of wings and the hard, swift body against her. She could hardly bear to think of it but she murmured politely, "Birds are very interesting." Then she suddenly said warmly, looking at the face of Sada, "My dear, you've no idea—learning about birds. I'm so *interested*. I never knew a thing about them before. The Dr. has gotten so interested in them. He tells me all about them."

"Oh, good heavens," Sada said, "I can't imagine George interested in birds."

"Well, birds are nice. You know the female is always a very drab color and the male is the one that dresses up."

"Really? Well, isn't that interesting . . . educational. . . ."

The two women, their arms intertwined, came away from the window and the shadow of a bird winged suddenly between the bright light and the room, a flying shadow for an instant flicked over them.

They sank down together and Sada opened a box of chocolates she had brought and they began talking together, that strange inconsequential talk yet fraught with all the meaning of life, possible only to women. It was hardly talk but like some primeval chatter, a chirping, with this high female laughter, senseless and hysterical. They told each other what had happened to them, what every one had said, what every one wore, what every one did.

"I don't feel like doing a thing," Sada said with a little breath of self-pity. "I'd like to give up one of my rooms." Then, with a gasp of laughter, "I only have one."

"Oh, Sada," Ellen laughed.

"I will have to move. I will. I can't bear it. Imagine what happened. I went up on the roof and one of the maids came up and hung out Judge Stoner's trousers. My dear, can you imagine how I felt sitting there and having her right before me hang up that old man's trousers! I'm not one to complain to authorities. I try to put up with things, but there were those trousers with the suspenders hanging down. It was disgusting, simply disgusting. And I went and complained and my husband said . . ."

Then Ellen Darling must relate a tale about a cat they had had at home when she was a girl, and the cat used to sit right in the middle of the table.

"What was it made of?"

"Oh, Sada, it was a real cat."

"A real cat. . . ." And they looked at each other and simply burst into nonsensical laughter.

The afternoon was pleasant and timeless, almost as it is when one is a little girl and one's best friend comes in and you have a corner where no one can molest you, and before you can blink, the afternoon is gone, the sun is setting, and it is time for supper, time for the family to gather, and the close strange paradise is over.

"Good heavens, see the time." They looked at the clock and it seemed to tick again.

"Oh, Sada, stay; please stay for dinner. Phone George and have him come."

"Oh, no, he's grouchy. You've no idea."

"Oh, stay, anyhow."

"No. No. Call a taxi. I have to hurry. I'll just have time to dress."

"Please, please, don't go." Mrs. Darling clung to the quick blonde woman, who was putting on her coat. "I wish you'd stay."

She wished the other woman would stay all night—forever. She always wanted some third person to be with them. There was a sort of jolliness when three people were together—one could forget about that terrible fearful intimacy.

But Sada powdered her nose and chattered, and they lit the lights because the blue darkness was creeping up between the bare cliffs, and the birds chirped outside like something sharp being broken in the mid-air and tinkling around the house.

It would be an hour before the doctor came, and she had a terror of that last hour of the day. "Oh, Sada," she said, clinging to the other woman.

"There's the taxi. Good-by. Good-by."

Both women felt like crying, as if they wouldn't see each other the next afternoon at the bridge party. Sada ran on her voluptuously curved legs down the steps, then she stopped and turned back where Ellen stood with the door half shut and shivering. She ran back. "Good-by, dear." They hesitated, looking at each other.

"You've got too much powder on your nose, Sada."

"Oh, ye gods. Good-by, darling."

"Good-by. Good-by."

III

Ellen Darling peeked through the door after the taxi had driven away. Opposite stood the grove of trees in the dusk. If only there were houses instead of the frightening grove of trees that always looked so dim at dusk, as if some presence slid behind the black trunks just as one looked away. She shut the door softly.

She could hear the cook moving in the kitchen. She wished she didn't have a cook, then she might get supper herself, and that would give her something to do that last hour. She went into the room where she and

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Sada had been all the afternoon. The little clock was ticking very loudly now. She found the picture in the Bible and stood looking at it for a long time, quite soberly, as if she were trying to see straight into it. She put it carefully in the Bible again. Then she stood listening. It was very still in the room and she did not know for what she was listening. She looked at the roses in the rug design.

Then her mind went all about the house—roamed about. She saw every crook and cranny of it and knew how they had planned it thus and so, every turn and crevice, the placement of every window looking out on the world. Now it was snug, an enviable house. Not a woman that did not envy her her house.

She stood very still, looking out of the eyes of that girl in the picture, that girl who lifted her breast and looked out and out.

She stood very still and the house shifted a little around her, and everything just shifted and broke up a little, and it was terrifying the way the house lay around her suddenly breathing, the living speech of her life.

She lifted her breast and her face and listened; so she looked for an instant very much like the girl in the picture—listening——

A pan was dropped in the kitchen. She went quickly to the window and pulled down the blinds, but not before she saw the blue darkness and the birds flying low around the brush-pile the doctor had made to lure a thrush.

She went to the front window to pull the blind, and she looked out across the thicket that stood in the rich, drifting duskiness. She saw a figure coming through the grove. A pang went through her. It was the doctor. She watched and watched, straining her eyes to see him coming through the thicket. Why didn't he take the road? His shoes would be muddy. It was annoying to have him come mysteriously like that through the thicket. She wanted to scream, to do something violent. But there he came walking nearer through the winter trees, and he looked like a lost boy to her. It was irritating to see him a little lost boy walking toward the house in the evening.

He came aimlessly, not firmly on his feet, but aimlessly. She thought for a moment he wasn't coming to the house at all, or perhaps it wasn't he. Oh, yes, she could not be mistaken in the droop of those shoulders, that shabby look; although, of course, he wasn't shabby in the ordinary sense; that is, his clothes were pressed and brushed, but for some reason shabby was the only word for it; he looked shabby, his body had a shabby, beaten look, and his face had a sharp pallor, and his nostrils flared up testily, and he was hard to live with of late.

Yes, he looked whipped, and it filled her with anger to see him look whipped and shabby. But there he was with his secretive eyes and his quietness and sudden tempers, and that was her husband. He came out of the thicket and was crossing the road. Then he stepped onto their lawn and stooped and touched the grass. What was he doing? She crouched now to the window, peeking out so he wouldn't see her. She thought she might discover something. She could scarcely breathe. What was he stooping to look at? Then he stood upright and looked around, looked over the river, and the dusk came thickly all around him, as if in a few moments it would blot him out, completely engulf him.

She felt like crying out to him, warning him of some danger, but she crouched at the window, shading her eyes. He came slowly down the walk through the thick dusk. Now she heard him step slowly on the porch, as if he were very tired. She had a moment of terror, as she always had at steps on the porch, dreading to see some strange person.

Then he opened the door with his key and she heard him in the hall. She moved away swiftly from the window. She felt guilty, as if she had betrayed him somehow watching him secretly. She stood wringing her hands a little in the room waiting for him to stand in the door.

Just as she thought, when he came in the door everything seemed natural again, habitual.

"Hello," he said, with that faint, caustic, withdrawn way he had.

"Hello," she said, and she went to him and he let her kiss him.

He went to the side window that overlooked the brush and the wren's nest. "I wonder if we got a bird today?" he said, shading his hand and putting his face close to the window so that his breath showed. She thought he would make a mark on the pane, and it had just been washed.

"Oh, well," he said, "it's too dark to see now. I can't see anything."

IV

"I hope we get a thrush and his mate," the doctor said, eating his dessert, bending a little over the dish with that tired droop of his narrow shoulders.

"Oh," Mrs. Darling said, "why is it so important?" She pouted a little, flouncing her shoulders.

"Oh, I don't know," he said, looking up at her with that humorous, tired ease he had. "Why not, Ellen? I think it would be nice to have a couple of mating birds for the season and their young ones."

She looked at him sharply but he was eating again, his face lowered. She thought she might cry, as she had often done when he seemed to be rebuking her about not having children, but then she thought better of it and went on eating her dessert in little nibbles, tasting

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

every bit. She did love blanc-mange, even if the whipped cream was fattening.

"Did you put oil in the car, Ellen?" he asked.

"Yes," she said childishly, "I told the garage man to do it. I told him to do it." Really, she had forgotten it completely; but if he found out, the garage man could be blamed.

"That's all right then," he said.

They went into the front room and she stooped to fix the fire, watching him anxiously. Why hadn't Sada stayed? Then she could have felt gay, like the doctor's wife. 'Oh, yes, that's the doctor's wife. Doctor Darling, you know. They live out on Victory Drive, in that stunning modern house. Haven't you noticed it? Aren't they an ideal couple? Oh, ideal, simply ideal.'

Doctor Darling stood by the table filling his pipe.

"Oh, look," she said, suddenly rising and going to the table. "I've something simply killing to show you." She took the picture out of the Bible, hiding it behind her back. "Shut your eyes, shut them tight." She held up the picture, "Now open them."

He opened his eyes and blinked at the picture. A slow smile curved his thin lips and he lifted his hand and took the picture from her, then he lowered it slowly under the lamplight and lowered his head. She watched him anxiously but she knew nothing of what he was thinking. The little crow's feet at the corners of his eye told her nothing. He stood with his lean face over the picture. She got uneasy and leaned against him.

"Well, it's a long time," he said, laughing uneasily.

Why didn't he speak?

"Look at those mutton sleeves; isn't it killing?" she said, trying to laugh.

He laid the picture down. "That must have been taken just before we were married," he said.

"Yes," she cried eagerly. "Don't you remember we were married on the 14th of October, and the week before father thought I was tired and sent me down to visit Aunt Mary and a girl named Sally. I wonder where Sally is now? We went down-town one day and stopped in and had our pictures taken. Let's see, it must have been on the 9th—yes, it was the 9th. I remember that . . ."

She went on, "Isn't it killing?"

But he had laid the picture down and was filling his pipe. Then he closed the pouch, the string in his teeth, and put it in his pocket, and struck a match and lighted his pipe. He picked up the paper then and sat down before the fire and opened it carefully at the front page. Now he would read it—deaths, births, marriages, from first to last—so she got out her knitting, for she must be ready to listen and remark the various comments he would make about people, accidents, deaths. Perhaps something would remind him and he would tell of some conversation he had had that day at the office, or he would tell of some incident in his boyhood, perhaps, of which she very likely had heard already.

So she sat knitting.

Until he said it was time to go to bed and she went with him.

V

It seemed to her it was only just light, and she felt uneasy and opened her eyes and saw him looking out the window through his binoculars down at the wren-house, and at the thicket of brush he had put for the thrush. She hated him standing there, hated him in a sudden gust of hatred.

"What are you doing, darling?" she cried in a small voice, looking out over the blankets she held to her chin.

But he was looking down—leaning against the window looking down—seeing far down the little black eyes looking up at him and the two birds sitting in the thicket so silent and watchful. He thought he could see the little round breasts breathing softly.

"They're there. They've moved in," he said, looking down, watching the round warm breasts that seemed to be so near through the glasses.

"Have they really?" she said.

"Look, look," he said, turning around, real excitement on his face. "Take the glasses."

She got out of the bed shivering, and saw that his breast was uncovered, naked.

"Cover up," she said acridly. "You'll catch cold."

But he paid no attention.

"The little rascals have moved in."

"Oh, yes," she said, looking through the glasses and seeing absolutely nothing. "Now they'll have a safe, warm home."

"Oh, yes." He took the glasses and looked again. Yes, there they were. The male was looking around so proudly, curving his head, and his roving gay eye perked around.

"By Jove, a proud, a perky little fellow. Look, see him there."

She held the glasses up but she was seeing absolutely nothing. She wished he would cover up his chest. It frightened her to see his naked chest exposed so near her. It was like the fright of that horrible little bird looking at her out of his round black eye.

She felt an obscure anger against him. Why be so excited about nesting-birds? Why didn't he cover up his chest?

She gave him the glasses and ran back to bed and snuggled down, covering up to her chin, and he stood looking out the window down at the birds.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Passing of the Democratic Fallacy

By Ernest Sutherland Bates

Once more a "New Deal." There have been so many of them within our memory! There was the opening of the Twentieth Century, which was to surpass all other centuries; welcomed by a group of writers of more promise than America had seen since Emerson; ushered in by the pragmatic revolution to bring philosophy back to life; with "Teddy" and the muck-rakers about to make the trusts be good forever; comfort and security for all just over the horizon. And in 1910? The new writers were dead; the muck-rakers were suppressed; "Teddy" had found it easier to slay lions than capitalists; a *roi fainéant* occupied the presidential chair. Again, there was the opening of the Wilsonian era; spring in the air once more; a welling up of poetry over the whole country; liberalism in the saddle;—to be followed by our crusade, hand in hand with France and England, to spread the blessings of democracy even among the barbarous Germans. And ten years later? Our great hero crippled and defeated; disgust with the very name of democracy; a plague on all foreign houses; the entire nation prone under the same paralysis that struck down Woodrow Wilson. Then the Twenties for a time burned brightly, if not in politics at least in art and literature and outward prosperity, only to meet the familiar end—ashes and dust. Too familiar by now. The Twentieth Century thus far has been a wanton. Profuse in promise, reckless of fulfilment, exacting a heavy price for brief pleasures not worth their toll, it has played false with every trust. In America, at least.

And yet, being human, we must hope. At the outset, there is some comfort in the thought that the analogy with all the earlier new eras fails in one vital respect. They began in joy to end in gloom. We begin in gloom to end—hardly, at least, in deeper gloom.

Let us, at any rate, take note of where we are—spiritually, not financially. Financially, we are, of course, nowhere. But there are other losses and gains to be recorded which are considerably more important.

The Twenties are dead. Long live the Thirties! The corpse is still unburied, however, and no adequate autopsy has been held. This is an unsafe proceeding; what if some miasma floating about the body infect the survivors?

First, we must be sure of the facts. Here we are on safe ground. Literature, that faithful index of the spirit, tells a tale that cannot be misread. Its whilom leaders have nearly all fallen into a sleeping sickness. Mencken no longer breasts the current with strong oars; now and then he takes a stroke or two, his boat spins round, and he lies back, satisfied. Sherwood Anderson occasionally appears, wraith-like; for the rest he is lost to mortal sight. No younger Cytherea or Linda Condon springs from the brain of the tired Hergesheimer. James Branch Cabell, we are told on good authority, committed suicide; his ghost, Branch Cabell, hovers fitfully about the grave. The later poems of Carl Sandburg flash but a pale reflection of the old fire reddening Chicago skies. Masters who shook the country with Spoon River was not able to budge the Lincoln Myth, or with many thousand words to equal his own twelve-line poem on Anne Rutledge. The most powerful writers at the end of the decade, Faulkner and Jeffers, plunge daily deeper into neuroticism. Decay and death; the defeat of the defeatists; the end of an epoch.

Futile gestures of escape marked its decline. Thus Willa Cather drew apart to immerse herself in ancient buried heroisms, landmarks on her pilgrimage to Rome. Thus Thornton Wilder went back two thousand years to find a viable religion. Thus the once bold T. S. Eliot sought sanctuary from the sins of the world in that most worldly of institutions, the Anglican Church. There is no help here except for broken spirits.

Of course, there are others who remain, undaunted. The restless mind of O'Neill will create new plots, impassioned characters, and poignant situations—though it seems doubtful now if he will ever escape the toils of the old wizard of Vienna. Dreiser fights on, he would not be Dreiser else, but there is no word of another "American Tragedy." Sinclair Lewis perhaps holds his own with "Ann Vickers"; certainly, save in detached scenes, he makes no advance. Will these—our greatest—really escape the creeping paralysis of their group or will they, more slowly, follow the lesser men? The answer at best is dubious.

With the coming of the Thirties, the Twenties did not immediately vanish. They lingered on in a kind of attenuated form. Reminiscence was—and indeed, in

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

some measure, still is—the fashion of the hour. The flood of autobiographies, starting with Isadora Duncan, rising with Margaret Anderson, Christopher Morley, Lincoln Steffens, and Emma Goldman—excellent though these autobiographies are, marks clearly enough a tendency to turn backward toward battles long ago rather than forward toward the unconquered future. In one of the more recent of these notable memoirs, Upton Sinclair writes, he says, for the younger generation which "cannot really share the anguish and turmoil of those far-off days" but wishes only to be amused and entertained. One suspects that Mr. Sinclair for the moment borrowed the method of his capitalistic opponents in thus nonchalantly "passing the buck" to the younger generation. Is it not, rather, that something has gone out of the older generation?

What has happened to our Samsons, eyeless now in Gaza? For the most part, they are not old, nor have they been captured by the Philistines. The reason for their failure to keep up with their own past must be sought elsewhere, and it is not far to seek.

The fact that they were "defeatists" is not here recalled to their disparagement but in their praise. Events have not discredited them but justified them too well. They told us we were headed for disaster on a hundred counts. The foolish heeded not; the rest said, "Yes, the deluge is on its way, but it will not come in our time." Well, it came in our time, and all the prophets of evil, from Dreiser to Stuart Chase, are vindicated.

And now, when their antagonists are shamed, when the smugness and cheap optimism and moral indifference that they assailed are gone, what is left for them to say? The graceless privilege of repeating "I told you so" is not one to appeal to magnanimous hearts.

A further question, however, remains. These leaders —not our puppet politicians but the real intellectual leaders, who were so profuse of warning during our apparent prosperity—why have they proffered so little help in our distress? The answer cuts deep into the whole problem of American democracy and shows our authors, for all their wisdom, to have been victims of the same delusion as the rest of us, a delusion equally the basis of their initial success and of their final failure. Our new era, if it is to advance a single step beyond the Twenties, must become fully conscious of this delusion.

On the score of democracy, the thinkers and writers of the period found that America was ceasing to be America in any recognizable sense and was changing for the worse rather than the better. They belonged to the older American tradition, that which gave us Jefferson and Emerson, Lincoln and Walt Whitman, and they found this tradition still honored on American lips but little evident in American life. That "fair deal for all" which had seemed so imminent during the muck-raking days had now receded into a future beyond the eye of man. Capitalism, allied with nationalism, had apparently become invincible. The inequitable division of wealth, the object of the Rooseveltian and Wilsonian attacks, was much greater than ever, but it was no longer challenged. The subservience of the working classes, alternately cowed and bribed into submission, was cited as the final proof of the blessings of capitalism, as if the highest aim of society were to create a race of slaves. Politics had become not less but more corrupt. When Lincoln Steffens wrote "The Shame of the Cities" there had been at least the hope of reform, but now municipal corruption was accepted as a *fait accompli* about which nothing could be done. And all the time our militarists and super-patriots mouthed the words of Washington and Jefferson.

It is probable that the literature of the 'teens and twenties will be looked back upon as a last flaming assertion of the Jeffersonian spirit. And the early decline of that literature is due to a clouded recognition, on the part of the writers themselves, that the Jeffersonian programme is no longer applicable. The reassertion of individualism, while successful and regenerative in private life, was an utter failure on the more fundamental issue of group activities.

When *The Little Review,* after fifteen years of warfare, closed its doors in 1929, it did so with the following words: "We have given space in *The Little Review* to 23 new systems of art (all now dead), representing 19 countries. . . . The world-mind has to be changed, no doubt; but it's too big a job for art. It is even quite likely that there will have to be reorganization on a very large scale before we can again have anything approaching great objective art . . . or approaching life."

Thus even *The Little Review,* most individualistic of magazines, realized in the end that it was on the wrong track and vaguely understood the reason. Its final utterance was the more significant as coming from a magazine that had been so little concerned with "reorganization on a very large scale."

American literature has at last become aware of the democratic fallacy. That fallacy consists of the assumption that men can enjoy political liberty and equality without economic liberty or equality. It had its origin in a series of historical causes into which it is unnecessary to enter here, and it became the fundamental dogma of American thought. It enunciated a noble end while stultifying the only means by which that end could be obtained. Thus there was a deep-lying inconsistency and self-diremption in the American programme from the outset. The inner logic of democracy went far beyond the inadequate American formulation.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

That this inconsistency could remain concealed for a century was owing to the peculiar conditions of American development. As long as the country remained agricultural and there was free land to be had for the asking, there was a considerable opportunity for economic independence. If a man did not take advantage of it, it was, or seemed to be, his own fault. But Jeffersonianism, as Jefferson himself understood perfectly, was adapted only to an agrarian society with plenty of free land. The Louisiana Purchase which he carried through so high-handedly was an absolute necessity for the success of his programme.

With the closing of the frontier and the unfortunately concomitant triumph of industry, the old economic opportunity disappeared forever. The era of land-grants was succeeded by the era of job-hunting. In the one a man's economic welfare was dependent on his own efforts; in the other, it is, at least equally, dependent on the will of his employer. The romantic adventure, hitherto open to all, became restricted to the few.

Thus there came about the formation of our two new classes: an irresponsible aristocracy of wealth and an unorganized proletariat of poverty. The older American middle class, wedged between the two, became more and more confused as time went on. By democratic tradition, its sympathies should have been with the working classes. But the fact that these were recruited from European countries with men alien in speech and manner, though usually at heart eager enough to become Americanized, finally aligned the middle class with the ruling order. The country was turned over to the captains of industry to manage, with the pathetic hope that they would be wise and generous enough to manage it for the benfit of all.

But at the very moment when there was such faith in "the new sense of responsibility" about to be acquired by our industrialists, business was cutting its moorings in legitimate production and distribution and launching upon far more exciting adventures. Spurred on by the opportunities of private profit, it inevitably entered the field of speculation and credit expansion. The shutting up of Dick Canfield's palatial gambling resorts in New York and Saratoga in 1902 and 1905 is now seen to have been a symbolic gesture. Gambling had by that time outgrown its early days of card-sharpers, race-track betting, and roulette; it looked back upon its adolescence with shame; it had become national and respectable and moral; its centre was the Stock Exchange. More and more, private business became openly what it was always at bottom: the endeavor to sell something for more than it was worth. The army of salesmen necessary to keep the venture going increased year by year. The desperate character of the whole enterprise was subconsciously expressed in such popular phrases as "a good gamble," "a good risk," "the game of business." It was a more thrilling game than pioneering, Indian-killing, or broncho-busting had ever been; the stakes were the highest that had yet been offered on this none too wealthy planet; it absorbed the energy of the nation for a quarter of a century.

It was the romantic glamour of private business, supplemented by the later nationalistic fervor, that rendered it impregnable to all assaults. Our writers, absorbed in their realistic and critical labors, failed, for the most part, to understand the power of its appeal. Frank Norris sensed it at the beginning of the century, Dreiser clearly recognized it, a few of the younger writers have caught its latest phases, but, as a class, our authors largely missed the point. And the radicals of the left did worse; by distorting the capitalist into an ogre of greed and cruelty, they discredited their own case. The capitalist was no ogre. He was in essentials simply a poker player who put over an extraordinarily good bluff.

There is, however, one important difference between business and poker. In poker, if one is so lucky as to clean out his opponents, he may go quietly home and enjoy his winnings. In business, the cleaning-out of one's opponents—including as these do the general public which must be cajoled or coerced into buying at as high prices as possible or buying as much as possible—necessarily means the cleaning-out of one's self. Competitive business is intrinsically self-refuting and self-destructive. It is constantly dogged by the menace of over-production or under-consumption, two words which, despite Henry Ford, mean the same thing. However swiftly it moves, its trailer rattles along behind it and whenever it meets any roughness in the road there is a crash. The modern credit system may delay débâcle but makes it all the greater when it occurs. Industry works to decrease the relative power of the consumer, yet at the same time it is ultimately dependent on the power and confidence of this same consumer. Faced with this dilemma it is no wonder that capitalism should have been utterly bewildered during the recent crisis.

For three years our industrial and political leaders watched the depression deepen—the depression which they neither warned against nor did anything to prevent and which they proved powerless to alleviate. "Captains of industry"? They were not even competent top sergeants. The collection of their utterances in the little book "Oh Yeah?" is the finest work of humor which America has yet produced. It may be said in their defense that they did the only thing they had

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

learned to do—bluff. But they didn't do it very well. And in November, 1932, the bluff of their chief prosperity expert was definitely called.

If the Great Depression had accomplished nothing more than to shatter the myth of the omniscient and omnipotent business man, that alone would have been worth all that it has cost. But it has done much more than that, in producing a new positive outlook. Let us turn once more to the literary men who at least knew what it was all about much better than did the men of affairs.

With the decline of the Twenties there appeared a new generation of writers who represent the forces to be reckoned with during the next decade. The work of nearly all of them is characterized by a pronounced swing to the left. They are no longer hampered by the democratic fallacy. While cherishing the gains of personal liberty, they are not fundamentally individual-minded but social-minded. They are after bigger game than John Sumner or the Anti-Saloon League. Their outlook is determinedly collectivist.

Ask anyone who are the significant critics of the hour. The answer will certainly include Max Eastman, an old collectivist but reckoned among the newer voices since his return from exile; Lewis Mumford, not yet quite free from the airy chains of utopianism; and Edmund Wilson, entirely unchained. The admittedly most significant fiction of the period is being written by John Dos Passos. Of less assured literary status but somewhere toward the front are Michael Gold and Lester Cohen. Among the younger philosophers, Sidney Hook is the most vigorous. All of these are in the collectivist camp. *The New Masses* has arisen, less witty, less well illustrated than the old *Masses,* but equal to it in energy. And, on a higher level, *The Modern Quarterly,* edited by V. F. Calverton, began its critical approach where *The Little Review* left off. "There will have to be reorganization on a very large scale." Change the tentative "very large" to "revolutionary," and you have the later attitude. It is not now the mood of defeat but the mood of confident challenge that is heard.

Long before the recent election there was already a new spirit in the air. The more profound of our older leaders—some of them, at least—caught its vivifying breath. Charles Beard scoffed at the "sturdy individualism" of the democratic tradition. *The Nation* ran a series of reconstructive articles, "If I Were Dictator." John Dewey, almost as alert at seventy as the younger leaders, had written even earlier: "We are in for some kind of socialism, call it by whatever name we please, and no matter what it will be called when it is realized. Economic determinism is now a fact, not a theory. But there is a difference and a choice between a blind, chaotic and unplanned determination issuing from business conducted for pecuniary profit and the determination of a socially planned and ordered development. It is the difference and the choice between a society that is public and one that is capitalistic."

Everybody, whether socialist, communist, or whatever seems to carry some scheme of social reconstruction in his head. Gerard Swopes has his, and President Glenn Frank of the University of Wisconsin has his, and George Soule of *The New Republic* has his. "America's Way Out" by Norman Thomas was, on its appearance and for a time, a best-seller. Equally significant, though heard only by the few, are the deep revolutionary mutterings of Briffault's "Breakdown."

The Democratic landslide of November marked the end of the post-war reaction which may now be seen in retrospect to have paralleled, almost exactly, the reaction in Great Britain after Napoleon. Our defeatist writers were our Byrons and Shelleys. It remains to be seen whether the immediate future will continue to ape the past. Outwardly, we seem only to have won back, at the cost of great toil and effort, to the standpoint of 1912. Even that is something—to be able to go on from where we were when interrupted by the war. Evasion for evasion, the sophistries of Walter Lippmann are, at any rate, preferable to the sophistries of Henry Ford.

The implications of the recent election are, however, more important than its overt meanings. President Hoover, while no great master of divination, was nearer the truth than his opponents when he declared in his New York speech on the eve of the election that the Republican Party was the party of traditional Americanism, meaning by this, precisely, the democratic fallacy. His antagonist, of course, at once protested that he was just as traditional in his thinking as was the President. But the surge of social unrest that carries him into office will inevitably sweep him far from these ancient moorings. The American people are plainly weary of that vestigial mockery of "natural rights," the doctrine of *laissez faire* which has enriched the few to the impoverishment of the many. That the public demand is for some wide-reaching social control of industry seems indubitable. The first form which this control will take will probably be another and even more bitter mockery. We shall see the same men who have wielded the forces of private industry climbing back into power as government officials. Not prosperity but fascism lies around the corner. When that point is reached, experience will teach us what reason can demonstrate even now, that social control is impossible without social ownership. Then, when the now moribund democratic fallacy is actually dead, we shall be ready for a real "New Deal."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Apostate

A STORY

By Lillian Barnard Gilkes

THE autobus was to start from the Piazza Venezia at two o'clock sharp. Thomas took out his watch.

"Seven minutes yet!"

The plain, practical face of Sarah sitting beside him in the bus bloomed out in a proud smile. "Danny got us here in plenty of time—he said we ought not to hurry——"

"Uh-huh."

But Thomas wished they hadn't been ahead of time. He reached for his handkerchief and mopped his bald forehead which still had a few briary gray hairs roosting there, and then he wiped round his collar which had wilted during luncheon. After that he flung on his hat—a gesture to let the world know it was time to be moving on. But the driver was nowhere in sight.

Two young ladies in the party wanted to know what the building was across the street, with all those naked figures leaning over the fountain and a thing like a summer-house perched at the top of the steps.

Danny could tell them, Sarah thought—if they really wanted to know. Danny knew everything about Rome. He was studious like that from a little chap—and every bit as good as an encyclopædia. My, but a delicate boy! She could smile now to think how scared she'd been about him, but she thought she would never raise him. Feeling so thankful he had been spared to them—she couldn't help it, whenever she thought of that time—she leaned toward the young ladies and said pleasantly, "It's dreadfully warm, isn't it!"

"Something fierce!"

Thomas said "Whew!" and hit his knee with the brim of his straw hat.

"Are you staying long in Rome?"

The young ladies said they wanted to get out of that heat. And they didn't care for the Italian cooking.

Everything has its disadvantages, of course—even when dreams surprisingly turn into facts. Sarah and Thomas had saved to take this trip, to come over and see Danny. In anticipation they had dwelled on it as some astounding climax of their lives, a rich holiday conferred by the same goodness of fortune that gave them their splendid son. Now they actually were having the time of their lives. But travelling is not so easy—not what it seems when you are sitting on your own verandah. Sarah had never known how tired she could get, which proved she was getting old. Especially her feet—how they did ache, the whole time! And she had expected Rome, somehow, would be much bigger and grander than it was. But it was all so different from New England—the scenery, the lovely gardens—wasn't it just like a dream to be here with Danny? Thinking of this, she felt distressed to hear people complain about the food.

"We have been here three days and we've seen pretty nearly everything. It's wonderful how much you can do, when you've got some one to take you around! Our son knows all the places—he's at one of the seminaries. We came over to see him, but tomorrow we've got to take the train——"

She broke off. She would not think about taking the train tomorrow. She would have the courage to be happy for Danny's sake, every minute of the time now. Surely, yes—for they would have this wonderful time to look back on, she and Thomas——

A man shoved a tray of souvenirs in through the window of the bus, and stepping on the running-board he put his head inside after the tray.

"Post-card, souvenir—ten lire, signora. Real coral!" He held up a chain, and fondling the beads, let them drip through the fingers of his other hand. "Very cheap!"

Sarah hesitated. She had never seen so much to buy as there was in Rome—everything from beads to the bones of martyrs and the peace of heaven after you were dead. Sacrilegious, that was—but you couldn't tell about these foreigners. And she did love beads! At home, she wouldn't have dared spend money like this. She looked from the beads to the man, and saw Danny coming back with the tickets.

He waved the tickets in front of him and said very firmly, "Don't take any more of those things—you've got enough, I think——"

"No, thank you—" she told the man. "No, I don't want anything——"

Danny waved the man away, and climbed into the bus.

"Here—" said Thomas, moving over. "Sit between us, boy——"

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"You have to be sharp with those fellows—they'll do you if they can!" Danny was smiling, but he sounded terribly serious. "The Italians have got a mean streak in them that way—hard after the dollar, you know. Well, we'll be off in a minute now——"

Sure enough, the driver strolled out of a tobacco shop and cranked up the bus. The conductor on the driver's seat turned round to count the heads. The bus rolled out of the Piazza.

"For Pete's sake!" One of the young ladies pointed out of the window. "Look at all those cats!"

Sarah looked. And Thomas stared as if he saw, that instant, the ghost of a Roman emperor, clad in the toga and waving the imperial sceptre, spring out of the stones and order him to be flung to the lions. In a long rectangular space, fifteen or twenty feet below the street level—why, there must have been a hundred cats! Pink oleanders bloomed against the walls of the enclosure, and whole families of cats dozed in the shade of them. Some, going apart from the crowd, stalked with tremendous feline indifference across the sun-beaten area; others reclined in narrow strips of shade made by fallen capitals.

"Well, I never!" Sarah gasped.

As the bus curved past the place, she caught sight of a battle in progress over in one corner. A black midget advanced and bowed its back at an orange tiger, and lifting one paw, planted a swat on the jaw of its yellow enemy.

"How do they get out of there?" Thomas wanted to know. "Too high to jump, I should think——"

Danny was feeling self-conscious, very much annoyed because the young women were listening. "We've just left Trajan's Forum behind—" He leaned forward, raising his voice, and his manner instantly became a reproof to the two girls for their common behavior.

"The Romans, you know, put those forums—fora, rather—all over the city. The emperors did it to impress the people, and each emperor tried to do something more elaborate than the last man. The column in the centre used to have at the top a statue of the Emperor Trajan, but about twenty-five years ago, when they started to excavate Trajan's Forum, the Pope had a statue of Saint Paul put there. The cats occupy the forum now. They are protected there, people feed them—and they never go out. It's quite an accepted fact, the cats in Trajan's Forum—one of the landmarks of Rome. You find that kind of thing quite often in this country. Simple-hearted people, the Italians, you know—just like children!"

"Oh, yes—" said Thomas. "Oh, sure!"

Sarah nodded her head. But neither of them quite took it in. They listened attentively to all Danny told them about the customs of Italy, and while they hung on every word their minds were on something else. What did they know of the contents of books? They were old folks. But their son was a great student. Look where his application and learning had gotten him—and he'd go right on up to the top!

But if only he were somewhere nearer home—not with an ocean between. It took so long for letters to get to America. Sarah would feel better about it all if he were just where she could look after him, to see that he got enough good food and plenty of sleep. He neglected himself so. Why, when he got with a book he'd sit up till all hours—and many a time it was broad daylight when she found him, still reading. She thought he looked peaked, dreadfully thin, and so—so sort of hollow-eyed. He was so nervous—he seemed excited all of the time. It wasn't natural. While he was talking his eyes shone, a flush came on his face—and he had a feverish unnatural look, as though something were burning him up inside. When he thought he wasn't watched he would go quite limp, staring in front of him at nothing. She had seen that look—that queer strained look on his face—as they leaned out of the train window in the station and saw him coming along the platform. It had gone right to her heart. She turned round to find Thomas and gave a cry of fear. "Oh, he's sick! Thomas, look—oh, what's the matter with him?" "Looks a bit seedy—" Thomas agreed with her. But as soon as she had kissed him, when she felt his arms come around her in a loving embrace she forgot everything else in the one fact—the thrilling, comforting fact that she had him back again and he was her own boy. Then she stole a long look at him and tried to make her question sound matter-of-fact. "Are you all right, Danny? Do you feel well?" And right away he was on edge, impatient of her worrying about him. "Why, of course, mother—you aren't going to be silly about my health!"

But his white face, his eyes like burnt shadows—they hurt her to see. She couldn't put that stretched look out of her mind.

The bus crept out of a winding black street where the houses almost met overhead, and the Colosseum stood up grandly before them. Danny told them about the great theatre that held eighty thousand people, pointing out the emperor's box, explaining how on the days of the great shows a canvas awning was stretched overhead to protect the spectators from the sun.

Thomas said, "Some size!"

"Right! When you think of such things——"

Danny paused, emotion stopping his thought. The pagan monuments exercised a fascination his vulnerable mind could not resist, though he knew them to

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

have been reared in abomination. For the symbolism of the Christian victory was here—spirit over flesh, the Empire of Christ, the Holy Church triumphant in the seat of the heathen gods. His mind was tuned in symbols.

What was it? Seeing his abstraction, the question began to beat again in Sarah's mind. What was the matter with him? Why, when he spoke like that—in that tranced voice—did he seem so changed? Not her son any more, but some grave stranger whom she was in awe of.

"It's very chastening—" he went on. "There's a great lesson for us in modern times—not to let our corrupt pride carry us too far. The vanity of the Roman builders—ah, but think of the American sky-scrapers!"

Beside the Arch of Constantine the bus stopped for two priests to get on. One was a young man, with a lean strong body and faded blue eyes that made his sallow face look tarnished. He was wearing a black gown and a little hard flat hat, and his finger-nails were bitten off and dirty. The other, in plain black clothes, had a rosary hung round his neck. He bowed to the people in the bus. His appearance was quite ordinary, but as he seated himself every one turned to look at him—feeling, no doubt, that it would be a bad thing to come into conflict with a man whose eye emitted such a cool and cunning beam. His self-possession, that was almost insolence, would make people afraid of his will. He spoke in English to his companion; and as he talked, there came on his face a look of sarcastic but not unfriendly amusement.

Staring past the priests, Thomas sighed and forgot he was in Rome. A long aisle of backward-turning years unrolled before him—that aisle of time down which he and Sarah had walked hand in hand, starting from their courtship and taking them past the few scattered mile-stones that humped above the uneventful level of their mingled lives. The first mile-stone, quite near the starting-place, was a grave—the dim mound which held the sad little ghost that had flown away from them so soon after it put on mortal flesh. The next mile-stone was Danny's birth. Thomas stared out of the window at the smooth brown foreground of the Roman Campagna, from which a haze of dust rose up to the sky making the road and the distance one, and an old vexation troubled him again. Too bad the boy had mixed himself up with the Roman Catholics! None of that in his family, or Sarah's. Plain Protestant folks on both sides, right back to Plymouth Rock. Unaccountable where the boy got it from! But he was always deep. There was something dead earnest about him, some quality that seemed to lift him up and put him out of reach. He said it was his faith. Well——

Another mile-stone loomed on the smooth horizon of his past, and Thomas heard Sarah's voice calling him to come into the front parlor. Like the majority of village front parlors this was an ungracious room, frigid and tidy, as becomes the apartment dedicated to unused and useless possessions. But somehow, the parlor had seemed the right place to discuss this thing. He walked in and found Sarah standing in the middle of the room. "Look here!" She spoke queerly. And then she showed him a crucifix and a rosary she had found in Danny's things when she was looking for his socks to mend. They looked at each other, voiceless. And Sarah said after a bit, "Well, what do you make of this?" But he could only gape at her, "What do you?" Then he burst out, "Good Lord! How long do you suppose—he's had those things in the house?" She answered, as full of incredulity, "I'm sure I don't know!" Again their looks met over the question neither spoke: what's come over him? If Danny had turned himself into a Chocktaw Indian, or a sun-worshipping heathen, it could not have been a harder thing to understand. When Thomas found his voice, light broke over the dark upheaval of his mind. "Sarah, this means—it means he's got another religion—he doesn't believe as we do!" The realization burnt like flame. "He's got hold of some nonsense—!" he shouted in his dismay. "Sh-sh!" Sarah shook him by the arm; her touch steadied him a little. "Let him alone, Thomas. You know you can't force him—you won't do any good—" Ah, he felt very baffled and miserable then. Not in the boy's confidence at all. But Sarah was right—you couldn't force him. He wouldn't give in.

There was a bump. Hey! Thomas was flung hard against the invisible angularities of the young woman next to him. The bus had stopped.

A gabbling confusion quickly arose, all on account of a goat in the road. The goat which was being driven by a peasant woman stood boldly in the way, its legs spread apart, immovable and baffling, while a bitter altercation in impassioned Italian raged between the driver and the peasant woman concerning the right to advance. When at length the mischievous animal was induced to budge a trifle to one side, so the bus could pass, it appeared that defendant and plaintiff both were equally vindicated. Thomas grinned.

By Jake, that animal got the best of it—you couldn't turn a goat from his fixed intention! Why, that goat made him feel at home in Italy. Now who would have expected that? Here he was, and Sarah, in this foreign land—and Danny showing them the sights like the king's agent. No, it would be the Pope's. Well, he guessed it was all right. Danny was a good boy, and no notions about incense and the rest of it could unsettle that. Never had given them any trouble or anxiety about—about a young man's difficulties—oh,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nothing like that! Thomas, smiling at such a thought, felt a glow like a warm perspiration coming out all over him. That boy would make good—and his dad would stand by him, sure!

"Say, what's that over there?" He asked the question without interest in knowing, but because—well, he was proud of the boy. Liked to hear him talk.

Danny said there were ruins like those everywhere in the teeming vicinity of Rome. You couldn't step but you came upon a bit of wall, or a piece of the aqueduct.

"The things tourists come to see—putting post-card atmosphere before the eternal spirit—the spirit of the Christian martyrs! Yes, people go abroad to look at architecture—but how little interest they take in the first monuments of our faith, which are as ancient—as ancient as the monuments of the Roman Forum!"

"Ah! But remember—" The dark-eyed priest had been listening. "The stone of our monuments came off the pagan temples—a most regrettable fact——"

"Oh, if you look at it that way—!" Danny was suddenly very angry. What right had this fellow to challenge him? He turned on the priest, hating him and feeling that the spirit of the martyrs had somehow been impugned. "I should call that being disloyal to the Church!"

"Some of us think differently——"

"There can be no difference of opinion touching the Church's infallibility!"

Thomas looked at Sarah, and she looked at him. He said "Gosh!" under his breath. And she felt as if she were waiting for a fire-cracker to go off. She didn't know what they were arguing about, but for strangers to quarrel—churchmen too! Danny used not to be like that—so touchy and ready to fly off the handle. It was—it must be because he wasn't well.

"If you are discussing doctrine—" The priest spoke in a quiet, slow voice. "That's a different matter—quite. Church doctrine must be held infallible—only so can discipline be maintained within the ecclesiastical organization. But I'm not here as a churchman now—I'm on a holiday—you see, I'm not speaking from the ecclesiastical point of view. And—" he added with a queer smile—"as a spectator—a tourist—I probably have some feelings in common with the layman."

"Well—" said Danny, shocked quite beyond discretion—"If you mean that you hold private convictions contrary to the Church's teaching, that's very serious—that makes you a hypocrite!"

"Oh, not necessarily!" The priest laughed.

"But you believe in compromise——"

"Naturally. And don't you? Is not the Church's history a record of judicious and enlightened compromise? Indeed, how are you going to bring the masses of erring mankind to the faith and keep them there if you do not compromise with human weakness?"

Still smiling, he turned to Thomas and said very cordially, "If it's of interest to you—the ruin you were asking about is what's left of a house where Saint Gregory—that was Gregory the Great—lived as a monk. As a pope, too, he taught there. They've got a table there now of the second century—just think of that!—from which Saint Gregory gave food to the poor."

"You don't say!" Thomas was astounded. But—if the table had hung on that long, the saint hadn't. He wondered if they had got any of his whiskers and finger-nails around anywhere.

"It would be worth your while to make another trip out here and go into that house——"

"Oh, I'm sure!" Sarah was extremely relieved to find something she could agree with. If the argument were begun again it would become a quarrel and this time, surely, something terrible would happen. Obscurely, she felt that Danny was in the wrong and she wanted to protect him, to rescue his dignity for him, if he would not himself. Apologizing, she added, "But I'm afraid there isn't time——"

"Oh! Well, there never is—nobody ever has time enough in Rome."

Really he means well, she thought. But remembering that they were leaving tomorrow, suddenly home seemed terribly far away. Would they ever reach home again? She tried to picture home and, strangely, she could form no image of her accustomed life. It seemed incalculably remote—more distant, even, than that foreign destination they could not imagine, when she and Thomas boarded the giant ship that was to take them to the other side of the world. Nonsense! Home was right there where it had always been—it wouldn't have walked away in their absence! But she felt afraid—of what, she did not know. And now she did not want to visit the Catacombs or do any more of the fatiguing things people do in Rome. They had not come all that journey across the ocean to look at Roman relics or at churches the Christians had built. They had come to see their son. The time was going—all but a few hours gone—and they had seen hardly anything of him. There was so much to do, and he wouldn't have them miss anything. But—why, they had not had a real good talk together yet! And tomorrow—tomorrow they must say good-by to Danny. Why, why was it so? Her health was good, but you never know—she might die without ever seeing her son again. And now that dry landscape out there—the Appian Way—though the sun was shining full on it, seemed to go under a shadow which made it monstrous and alien and ugly; and hot as the temperature was, she shivered looking at it.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Danny sat staring angrily out of the window. The priest, with a peculiar crafty smile on his face, continued talking to Sarah.

"I walked out here the other day in the early morning—" he said with a wave of his hand toward the road: "The sun was just coming up and we walked along in the glow of the sky. Bare-footed, you know—I thought of the martyrs! We had an archbishop along with us—" He said that as you might have said, "We had Johnny along with us." . . . "You know, it's very pleasant at that hour. Several of us were going out to say a mass in the Catacombs and we all walked along singing hymns—bare-footed—" He laughed. "Just like the martyrs!"

The bus stopped in front of a plain little church with a dusty white plaster façade. Danny said they were to get out and go inside. Sarah was glad he gave her his arm to lean on, for she had not even yet got over the nervous feeling she had about going into Catholic churches. Not that she expected anything dreadful to happen—of course not! But she felt as though God were watching her.

Inside the church it smelled of wax and garlic. The white walls looked strange, though they were ordinary; but the candles burning in bright clusters warmed them and hid their squalor. The uneasiness that troubled Sarah increased as she glanced about. The sight of a woman with a pinched sorrowful face, dressed in black and kneeling before one of the shrines, affected her with a kind of shock. She was used to making her supplications to God in the decent privacy of a church pew, and she thought she never could get used to the foreigner's ways of worshipping and love-making in public, not even if she lived over here. When she saw Danny go down on his knees and make the sign of the cross she began to tremble queerly. A nameless emotion burst from her heart and she wanted to cry out, "My son! O my son!"

Thomas came and stood close to her, and she put her hand in his. The bus conductor came in, followed by the rest of the party, and when he had got them all around him he began to speak an oration about the church. The priest who had talked to her in the bus was standing in the group, and she saw him turn away with a shrug, as much as to say, "That's all nonsense!"

"Come this way!" Danny called to them. He took hold of Sarah's arm and Thomas's other one, and walking between them guided them to a spot where there was a little iron cross standing up in the stone floor. "Look!" he said, pointing to the floor. They both looked, and saw the perfect imprint of a human foot graven in the stone.

"You know the story?" Danny asked, looking from one to the other. "This is where Our Lord met Peter as he was going out from Rome, and that is the spot where he stood. There you see His footprints—there are two of them, one a little fainter—left behind in the stone. Of course you can believe it or not—as you like. But there is the proof! Can you stand on a piece of granite in your bare feet and make an impression like that? Of course not! I say there's no question about it—it's a fact that can't be denied. Peter said to Our Lord, 'Quo vadis? Quo vadis—where are you going?' And Our Lord replied, 'I'm going forth to suffer again because thou art going away from Rome——'"

Sarah bent forward to see. Thomas exclaimed, "Humph! Well!" Hand in hand they stood together in wonder, gazing down at the divine mark.

"Quo vadis—where are you going?" Danny repeated it like a chant, like an invocation. It seemed to Sarah his voice sang with a passionate tenderness that smote her strangely; and Thomas stood ill at ease, fingering his hat.

"There it is, you see—you'd better kiss it before you go——"

"Yes—oh, yes!" she cried, too much moved to say more. Thomas murmured, "Oh, sure!"

Danny knelt down and touched his lips to the stone. Dismayed, she clung tighter to Thomas's hand—and while her son stood by, whipping her on with his unbending will, impeded by her stoutness she stooped and did as he commanded her. Thomas came down stiffly on one knee beside her.

Out-of-doors the sun was bright, too bright—it made black spots come before Sarah's eyes. Thomas blinked and rubbed his. The priest who had argued before got into the bus beside him, and remarked, "Of course, that's not an article of dogma—it's a tradition. But it could have been. He could have done it— He might even have done it deliberately. Over here I have seen many things I never expected to see. A piece of the true cross, a fragment of the cross of the good thief—three of the nails from the cross of Our Lord, and two thorns——"

It was all very marvellous. Thomas agreed with the priest. But you couldn't be sure it was true unless you had faith. His own faith didn't cover quite as much as that—not by a good deal! But what was that fellow always putting in his oar for? He didn't exactly trust 'em, those priests.

A monk in a brown robe, sandals on his bare feet, led them through the Catacombs. He was an old man and he had a wan sad face, and a long gray beard which gave him an early Christian appearance. Now and then when he was speaking, his voice would die away and he seemed to forget what he was saying, but

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

his dreaming eyes looked to be full of memories. He addressed everything he said to Danny. Sarah and Thomas didn't mind that—didn't mind not understanding. Danny translated everything promptly, and it made them feel pleased and proud to hear him reply to the monk in Italian.

It was chilly in the passages, and black dark. The brother handed them each a wax taper to light their way. When they came to the place where the infants had been entombed in the rock wall, Sarah was suddenly overcome with misery and panic at the thought of how little they were to suffer in that grim place. And she asked herself, how could people do the cruel, wicked things the Romans had done? Once they heard voices ahead of them and saw the tapers of another party moving up through the gloom, a poor little glow bobbing about precariously in the choking dark. Presently the corridor broadened out into a chamber where, in a recess behind a grill, several candles were burning on an altar that held some bits of vestments under glass. The candles shed their yellow light upon a woman's figure, on a bier in front of the altar. The face frozen in youthful innocence seemed moulded of moonlight, an expression rapt of the moon lying like frost upon the marbled features, the high arched nose thinned and sculptured by death.

"Oh!" Sarah drew back, uttering a soft scream.

"It's all right—nothing to be afraid of," said Danny, genuflecting and crossing himself. "That's only a plaster cast."

Thomas coughed in relieved embarrassment.

Fearfully they went up to the bier and looked into the face. It seemed impossible even yet that the likeness of martyred flesh was plaster, the cold moon-color of the features but the reflection of candle-light in a hollow cave. This was the tomb of Saint Cecelia.

Holding his taper high to throw the light farther, Danny told them the story of Saint Cecelia—how she was the daughter of a Roman noble family and was betrothed by her heathen parents to a Roman youth named Valerian, and how, filled with her influence, her parents became Christians and Valerian suffered martyrdom. Danny's eyes were lit with a strange dark fire, and as he related the frightful defamations to which the beautiful body of Saint Cecelia was subjected his voice rang with a fervor that seemed to lift him to some tremendous climax of transcendent feeling. One could believe that his own veins took fire with the agony and the rapture of the Roman girl's martyrdom.

"She was just a slip of a girl! Frail, and lovely, and afraid—afraid of the soldiers—" With a swift movement he raised his hands; the knuckles showed white. "They must have torn her white flesh—they probably violated her—" His body tense, he seemed about to throw himself forward upon some invisible form. His face was very pale. Then he took a step backward and dropped his hands. "Just a slip of a girl——"

"For a long time—a great many ages—" he went on with the story, "her body was lost. It disappeared and couldn't be found. But finally it was recovered, and then—" He lowered his voice significantly. "It was found to be absolutely uncorrupted—absolutely uncorrupted!" The word "uncorrupted" had a pulpy sound as he uttered it, as if it came from under his tongue. And he repeated it with a kind of joy, as though it signified for him a supreme and secret ecstasy.

His voice pealing forth in the weird dusk woke an old echo in Sarah's heart. Strange, how familiar! And then she remembered those tones—Thomas, in the days of their courtship, had used them speaking to her of love. Momentarily her youth returned upon her, and a warm flush streamed down her throat under the neck of her dress. Love had seemed such a horrifying thing. But there are things in life that don't seem real or right until you have accepted them, and then you wonder how they could have been anything but natural.

A wild excitement shone in Danny's eyes, and his face—so pale—made her again afraid for him. He lived too much on his nerves—ah, that was it!—and too much alone. Some way it injures folks to have too much of one thing, be it religion, getting rich, or love. As a boy he was restless, in the house and out—he couldn't settle to anything. And Thomas was strict with him—wouldn't have him dawdling about when there was work to do. Once she had found him out in the barn, sitting humped over on the stool beside the cow he had been milking—the cow switching her tail, disgruntled, and rumbling to herself; the milk pail standing only a quarter full. He'd been crying. . . . "What is it? What trouble have you got, my son?" She did not often show feeling. But the sight of his distress afflicted her keenly. She folded her arms around him, half lifting him from the stool; and for an instant he laid his face against her bosom. In silence they stayed so, his head pressed in to her shoulder; and it seemed her very self that she held there clasped in a tight embrace, her separate flesh united mysteriously with his, melted in compassionate love. The mare began munching straw in the next stall, and as though that external sound put an end to their communion a single sob burst from him—an uncouth, terrifying sound. "Oh, mother—I want something—I don't know what!" And she never knew, either, what that desire was. But she remembered she, too, once had felt a yearning after something, nameless and unattainable. The feeling was gone before she could identify it, displaced by other

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

feelings; for then she met Thomas and married him.

She drew her breath in a deep, slow sigh. That instant she felt a touch of heart-burn. It must be the heat —and all this going—she wasn't used to it. She reached in her hand-bag for her little bottle of soda-mints, and poured a heap of the tablets into her palm. Swallowing one, she put the others back and corked up the bottle again.

Danny motioned to the brother, and led the way out of the dusk-filled chamber again into swallowing darkness. "Better go along now! You can spend all sorts of time in these places, but you've got to pack——"

They groped through black corridors, airless and dank, and inhospitable as a grave. Sarah was afraid of falling. Danny held her arm, but she stumbled several times before they got outside. They had a moment to wait for the bus. An ancient vehicle it was, and subject to spasms of exploding noise. They bumped forward, nearly thrown off the seats, a cloud of dust kicked up behind which whitened the grass along the edges of the road. Then the bus took a run of speed, like a young horse going to take a hurdle. But the leap didn't come, and presently they drew up outside a trattoria. The driver got down to get himself a drink.

Danny asked if they wouldn't like something. "Water—or lemonade?"

"Anything'll suit me, so it's wet—" Thomas declared. "I never was so plum dry in my life."

"Lemonade's good to quench thirst," Sarah said. "That's what I'll have."

"Make it three, then. Hey! Wait a minute—" Thomas grabbed in his pocket for some coins.

"Oh, that's all right—" Danny started off. But Thomas wouldn't allow it.

"You're crazy, boy—keep your money!"

In a minute Danny came back and announced, "He wants a lira each—I think it's too much——"

But Thomas laughed. Out of a great guffaw he said, "Sure, go ahead—I guess a nickel won't break me up!" Still chuckling, when Danny had gone he turned to Sarah. "What do you think of that!"

She shook her head, smiling. But she knew. She knew it was because he didn't have the money to spend. Regretfully, she tried to remember whether they had let him pay any of the admissions to the places he had taken them. She hoped not, but she couldn't be sure. He was so quick at attending to things. She guessed Thomas could spare a bit of money to leave with him—five dollars or so would at least buy him some warm gloves for the winter. He used to suffer because his hands got so cold. And people said it was a disagreeable climate in Rome in the wintertime—the dampness was the thing.

"He's learned a thing or two. He's learned how to hold on to his money, all right! He'll get along——!"

They exchanged glances, their faces softly aglow with admiration of his shining qualities. Their splendid son! Then Thomas's countenance turned sober.

"Say—do you suppose they give 'em enough to eat in that place?"

"What place?"

"I'm talking about that seminary!" He didn't know why he was suddenly angry. But he thought she knew —well enough—what place he meant. "You know, these Catholics are great on fasting—I thought, maybe——"

She had the same thought. Maybe, in the interests of piety, his body was not being cared for.

Danny came out of the trattoria carrying the lemonades, straws sticking up in the glasses. But there were only two.

"Where's yours?" Thomas asked quickly.

"Thanks, I'm not going to take any—I had some water inside. Here's your change——"

"I don't want it."

"It's your change, Father——"

"I said I don't want it—" He was shouting now. "Don't give me any more of that tin money!"

In his impatience he struck Danny's hand that held the money, knocking a two-lira piece to the ground. It jingled on the pavement. "Lot of foolishness!" he muttered under his breath. Danny stooped and picked up the two-lira piece, and dropped it carefully into his pocket.

The Roman dusk was coming down—the rich, fanciful, gold-brown dusk that spreads over the darkening olive trees a mauve obscurity and blackens the pines, stooping gaunt on the yellow rim of eternity. Swallows were going to and fro overhead, dashing against the eaves and dropping their faint twitterings.

Danny leaned back, sucking air into his lungs. There was a pain in his chest. He drew his lips into a rigid, tight line to stop the pain. Words came into his mind —"the Power and the Glory"—and he felt them in his blood like a canticle. He looked away at the Sabine Hills, loping along with the motion of the bus like a procession of gray rabbits on the horizon, hopping one behind another endlessly; and he grew aware of an exultation in his soul, concocted of some subtle chemistry of atmosphere. Something acrid and sharp, yet sweetly disturbing. He often felt that at this hour, in Rome. He felt as if his naked body were enveloped in a burning, transfiguring light. To be near that light, seared and uplifted by it forever, was the utmost desire of his soul.

He remembered his childhood, that wintry time of toil spent in a harsh endeavor to make the earth give

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

up its fruits. And he recoiled from the memory as he had done from the haunted emptiness of the life he had had to lead. He saw himself a small boy in patched overalls, going unwillingly between the new furrows to drop in the seed. How bitterly then he had felt the binding village horizon shut down upon his straining spirit like some immense lid screwed down from the sky! Beyond that horizon he had thought there must be a place where it was possible to gain the things his mind visioned as so richly desirable—splendor and power and ceremony, and the purity of God. The books he read, though not many, were as wings that admitted him to the huge inviting realm encircling the mean restricted world he moved in. He read them lying up aloft in the hay, in moments filched from the chores—books about the missionaries of God who converted idolaters and kings. When no one was by he used to take them from the shelf in the kitchen that was between the brass clock and the heavy Bible which stood uptilted, clasped in a metal holder, feeling queerly ashamed to publish his preoccupation with the mysteries of the soul. His parents, in their simple devout minds, at first had seemed pleased with his interest in unworldly subjects; but soon they perceived in such things an encouragement to idleness, and commanded him to leave books alone except on Sundays. He felt the privacy of his soul ruthlessly invaded when his father ascended to the hay-loft and discovered him reading on a week-day. From negligence he had let the pigs get into the beans and banquet, to their agony and his humiliation, upon four superb rows of Kentucky Wonders. It was the one time in his life his father had laid a hand on him, but the memory of it still was obsessionally horrifying. He had but to turn and walk away and his father, a physically small man though wiry, would not have been able to use force on him. But some other subtler, inexplicable force rendered him powerless to defy his father; and so he stood up and let himself be whipped.

Mysterious power that the physical personality wields over minds in conflict! But he had broken out of that bondage. The day that Father Connolly came into his life he had ceased to feel himself in subjection to any authority outside himself, save only Divine Authority. A lad of seventeen he was then, and the priest came walking around a bend in the road. He marched up to Danny—on his way into town with the calf to be sold—and inquired how far it was to a place called Quimby. He had never heard of Quimby nor any such place, but he offered the priest a lift into town—and it was just like taking a ride with his destiny beside him! A magisterial, inspired man was Father Connolly, possessed of an eloquence that could conquer anything. A stranger apparition than a figure of a Roman priest was hardly to be found upon a New England highway. But out of oddities and strangeness have sprung many of God's most cunning miracles—what is incredible to heretics and blind men is to the man of faith the most immaculate, the only true reality. When the priest went away he left with him a crucifix and a breviary.

He saw ahead now the city coming into view, its domes phantasmagorial in the dusk. Watching the houses grow upon the skyline, he felt that the memory of his childhood stirred in him nothing but a sense of bitter alienation. He turned and looked at the old man sitting beside him, dressed in out-moded clothes of some thick material and having about him a scrubby, formal, old-fashioned gentility; and he felt strange to his own flesh and blood in his parents. What was it, he asked himself, that divided flesh from flesh? What made the difference? What had opened this immeasurable gulf between their lives and his, between their passions and his passions? He did not know. He only knew he would be glad to be alone again when his parents had gone from Rome—quite alone. It was distracting, the obligation to look after the old people and find them entertainment. Their mute boundless affection, which he felt unable to reciprocate, was burdensome.

"Look here——!"

His father's voice dropped into his thought like a stone falling into a still pool; and with the sound in his ears his broken thought went rippling and curveting away to the covert quarters of his mind. He answered, "What?"

Thomas had been nerving himself to put a question; but now that he had it on the end of his tongue he didn't know what to do with it. He wished he might fling it away somewhere, where it wouldn't be found. All the same, he wanted to know for sure. Sarah and he had tackled it in secert. He cleared his throat and went for it now, adopting a voice that proclaimed him the head of the family.

"Er-ah—you've been three years over here. I suppose you'll be getting through soon and coming home?"

Danny turned, instantly resenting it that his father should use such a tone with him. As though he were a lad in college! Then it flashed through his mind that the old man probably meant this as a slight to his religion. They never would learn not to bring up that subject. He was sorry if it was painful to them, but he didn't see how he could help it. He was not going to discuss his faith with them. He thought what his faith was to him, and he wondered at other people's weak beliefs.

In that moment, he felt his isolation acutely. He could not live in his own country, and he was out of sympathy with his time. An exile, lost out of time,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

stranded among a race of aliens who were hostile to him—his soul was swept by nostalgic passions that resisted human ties. He felt as though a wintry blast, cold and lonely, had rushed at the windows of his spirit. He knew himself cut off. Then it struck him that such had always been the lot of the Church's people, to be reviled and misunderstood. And all at once his feeling changed; he felt uplifted again, exhilarated by pride and resistance and a passionate self-assurance. His soul was as a mediæval garrison having contempt for the besieging enemy, exulting confidently in the power behind four walls to endure forever. He felt that he understood his destiny, that his personal relation to destiny was a secret matter between him and his Creator, and he was even glad that others understood it not —scornfully glad to be alone as he was, because it gave him a superior strength. His feeling cleaved to the teaching of religion that this strength comes from God, and it made him incapable of perceiving that God's strength is in the hearts of men. As he turned and faced his parents now, thinking of their wish to draw him and bind him to them, his heart was choked with ice.

"When are you coming home?"

"I'm not coming home," he replied coldly. "My work is over here. I have no other home but in that——"

"Eh?"

Thomas heard the words. But his mind cast them back in his ears where they simply rattled without sense. The blood rushed to his head and he was conscious only of an overwhelming fury that hummed about his ears, an enveloping rage against what he did not know.

"So, that's it! Oh—well——"

But he could not get command of his voice to speak because his thought was incoherent, pitching about in the darkness of his mind like a ship stricken in a tempest. He did not know what he thought. But more than anything else in life—the bit of life that remained to him—he wanted his son at home again. He was suddenly bitterly conscious of his age. That was true —he was an old man now, and he needed his son. Soon he would have to give up altogether. And when his time came, it would be hard to go out with his son not by. His only son was stripped from him and given to God. What for, he thought, what for? His mind was full of blasphemy. For the first time in his life he doubted there was a God in heaven. He could not reconcile the two things—a Heavenly Father and the loss of his son. But he was a religious man instinctively, an old man besides, and used to believing. Whatever was done to him he could no more cease to have faith in the Might of God, whose benevolence it was not permitted men to question, than he could call back his youth and begin his life over. He sighed heavily; his head dropped forward. But his son thought he was only moving his position on the seat against the jolting of the bus.

Sarah started, hearing those blasting words spoken in her son's voice, "not coming home." How could he say such a thing to his father and mother, that he had no home! Had he no love, then, for the home of his people? Oh, why was it given to a woman to bear children and they to leave their parents comfortless in their old age? A sharp sound between a gasp and a moan came from her throat, and leaning forward, not to miss any word of what was so incredible and painful, her groping hand came against Thomas's knee. His hand closed over hers.

And Thomas remembered Job. He remembered it was the fate of old men, one way or another, to lose their sons. He pressed Sarah's hand, and in that moment something struck him, the first scourge of that pain they would endure the rest of their lives together in the loss of their living son.

"Why should I go back to America?" Danny, his voice tense with frigid passion, was speaking to them both. "What is America to me? The life there has become so utterly material—people cutting one another's throats for gain—I feel choked at the thought of it! I can understand the bitterness in the Master's heart when he wept over Jerusalem. I—" He struck himself on the breast. "I—have felt that!"

Thomas raised his eyes and looked timidly into his son's face. His head felt heavy, and there was a queer trembling in his neck.

"All I want to know is—if you're happy over here—that's all I want to know——"

Danny's face which had been radiant clouded momentarily. He was gazing in front of him with a fixed, wild stare. Then a light blazed up in his eyes which became a look of reckless passion.

"Happy—yes, I'm happy——!"

The old people, still with hands clasped, looked again at their son. Their eyes strove to penetrate behind the impassive pale features to the inexplicable purpose nestled within his brain. But only the physical countenance they had created out of their bodies met their gaze—an aloof set of features that no longer confided the intimate processes of their son's life.

They turned away their eyes to the dusty, disordered plain spreading back from the road, with the dim gray ghosts of the Sabine Hills trailing behind in the distance. They heard the swallows speaking together from the house-tops.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LIFE IN THE UNITED STATES

Feet in the Grass Roots

By Josephine Herbst

YOUNG men coming to Iowa in the eighties used to sing a song about the land of the free where the mighty Missouri rolled down to the sea and a man is a man with the freedom to toil. That these rich Iowa acres have been worked by men who toiled is plain to the eye. Only the paint wearing thin on barns and houses this year hints of the disease that is making the farmer feel all his toil so much folly. A blight more bitter than drought or grasshoppers has fallen upon him, a drop in prices below cost of production, coupled with plagues of high taxes, mortgages and falling values of farm lands.

The farmer has listened to a good many quack cures for his ills. News that he is at last treating himself only becomes real on the Denison Highway when we pull up beside a red lantern, a red flag, and a sign, STOP—FARMERS' HOLIDAY. A group of farmers on the steps of the Golden Slipper Dance Hall outside Sioux City convinces more than any boiled-over comments in papers east. The farmers are striking. They are big men, in overalls, stubbly faces, not so slack in the pants as the farmer I remember, not so shy or ingratiating. They look at us without smiling and we look at them.

A car drives up and an old farmer comes out to it. The man in the car, sitting hard back on the seat, stops as if pulling in a team of horses with a "Whoa, there." "Going to shut 'em up tight as a drum, boys," he says. A movement among the boys, quick excitement, the positive feeling that something is about to happen.

We move on toward town with its dingy red-brick buildings that now seem to hold the excitement of a barricaded place. The town people are chattering about windshields being broken, produce withheld from market to force the price up, milk spilled, highways picketed. One minute they talk of their sympathy for the farmer, burdened with taxes, liens, mortgages, feed and seed loans, deficiency judgments, bank waivers, and prices below cost of production. The next they hint that if something isn't done the militia will be brought in, and then bloodshed. There are the excitement and timidity that war brings in their analysis. A lot of them aren't sure the farmer isn't getting just about what he deserves. They mutter that he was "extravagant" and wasted his substance following high prices during the war. The farmer's dumb, the town man likes to think, he's getting it in the neck, but what of it? The fictitious farmer who craves a fancy education for his children is the one the town man thinks he knows.

Coming back to Iowa is coming to the State where I was born and raised. As we roll along the hilly green fall country, the fat barns, good houses and good crops make the towns seem negligible. In the eastern part the old trees and houses, squares, and prominence of churches, make living seem a little plush and stale. In the western part the towns stick out, ugly, from the fat countryside, the homes up-to-date, suggesting Sears Roebuck and a quick, raw method of getting and spending. This industriously tilled soil has brought trouble to the men who work it.

My father sold farm implements to these men in northwest Iowa, Nebraska, and the Dakotas. He was a kind of family doctor to their machinery too when it began limping in threshing season. As a child I drove all over this country with my father, eating fried chicken and chewing corn on the cob, and when the crops were in he and I would take the team and drive around to see what cash we could pick up on old debts. They put him off oftener than not and we would drive back in the violet evening with the hills dark and lovely and beneficent and he would point out the fields quietly with his whip. My father lost his business trusting farmers who could not pay their debts. Land prices climbed during those years. Yet he went out burdened with outlawed debts of farmers who year after year didn't have cash to meet their payments. Some farmers sold out and came to town, but I never saw a farmer living "high." Most of his family worked hard a long day. The town man grumbles more than any farmer I ever heard of, but he likes to talk of the bellyaching farmer. He's talking now, half sympathetic, half critical, because he's not sure his bread isn't buttered by the farmer.

Buying a paper, eating in a coffee shop where the old corn crib is glorified in frescoes, we hear travelling men talk of bad business and the farmers' woes. This town has been stoned to life by farmers throwing spiked telephone poles in the paths of deputies. The streets here look very much as they used to, but the cheaper red neon light has almost wiped out the white electric sign. The day before, four governors and representatives of four governors broke up council about the farm situation. No one was stunned by their presence. The talk is of the farmers' big parade piling through the street backed by their "demands." Not requests, demands. Thirty thousand crowding the streets and the governors' recommendations passing the buck to Congress did not even bring disappointment. Who had really expected anything? Not the farmer.

Some one tells me that Milo Reno,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nominal head of the Farmers' Holiday movement, is a smart man. He was saying three years ago that the time to go on strike was before an election. For a smart man he gets very little comment from the farmer. Out on Highway 20, known as Bunker Hill 20, where the first picketing brought success to the milk strike, winning a rise of one and one-half to three and one-third cents a quart, sitting around the fire with the picketers that night we heard Reno's name mentioned only once.

But first we drove around the town where I lived most of my life. The thing has mushroomed out into comfortable homes. It is evening and the lights are on full blast. There is a great deal of light in this town and the red neon lights of the downtown streets are curiously fitting for it, with its flavor, never lost, of a frontier town, where good women and mothers rouge higher than in Eastern cities and obscure murders and rape crowd the front pages of respectable daily papers because people demand such news. On this very night as picketing is sombrely going forward on dark roads, a rocking-chair contest is limping along in town and little high-school girls are entertaining at parties, very conscious that their efforts will flash on the society page the next day. The town man has had his salary cut, many have lost their businesses, but the lights are still bright. Only in farm homes have the electric lights been turned off, the telephone wires cut. The farmer is filling the old kerosene lamp to read his paper by.

The road to Bunker Hill 20 is full of curves. The tall corn grows to within a yard of the pavement. The night sky is very deep blue with a moon almost full. Then the top of the hill and on the swing downward a fire burning under a canvas shelter, a ring of men on the ground, two tents with lanterns in doorways, a long bare table. The talk as we come up dies down, then as we squat by the fire, comes up again. A few look at us curiously, we at them. Some fine-looking strong fellows in overalls, blue shirts open at the neck or loosely tied with a stringy tie. Stout men in this group and stout sticks in their hands. As the farmer talks he stirs his stick quietly in the dust.

I ask a farmer near me if he knew my father. He is too young; my father went out of business fifteen years ago. An old man with a white mustache and fluffy white hair slides around and says: "Better sit on this piece, you ain't sitting comfortable." He points to a bigger hunk of wood and I say I am sitting all right. He says, "I knew your father. He had a partner who was a great horse swapper."

The tight ring around the fire seems to open, the eyes looking down look up, a rumble down the road at the foot of the hill, a cry "truck" and every man is on his feet, moving toward the road with stick in hand. A big fruit truck heaves up, stops, and then passes. The farmers are after only farm produce. They drop to the fire again and the old man with the white mustache, eager and complete with the kind of rare quality of a person who has had a good life in spite of disappointments, this old man lolling by the fire talks of the old days when all you had to do was to buy land and sit on it and the price would rise. He names a dozen farms I used to know, all heavy with mortgages, some ready to foreclose.

"The farmer's got his back to the wall. He can't go on like this. Some of the boys are hard to convince at first, they're so used to muddling along by themselves. You have to reason with them. But all we need is to hold together; we can't lose then. At first there were only a few. Every idea begins that way. That first day when the deputies drove through, the boys scattered through the corn. They wouldn't do that so easily now. Look how tall that corn grows. It's as good to fire from as to hide in." His voice is slow and quiet. At that moment he believes what he says and every other man around the fire believes it. When one talks the others listen with a civilized courtesy that belongs to people like them, or to the stage, not to the town and its nervous, interrupted chatter. It is all orderly, like a play.

There is another cry of "truck" and they amble into the road. The night is set like a stage. The deep blue sky, the fire, and the lanterns burning, the strong shapes of the men in their loose overalls, slouch hats and caps, impressive sticks. An argument begins. You can hear the appealing tones of the driver who admits he has been closed out of Highway 75. "Now, boys, I don't know why 75 wouldn't let me through. I reasoned with them."

"Don't you know you can't get through without a pass?"

"No, boys, I never had a pass before and I came through this very road." The challenger peers at him and turns to the boys. "Any of you boys seen this fellow before?" No one speaks up. The challenger says, "None of the boys ever seen you before."

"Now, boys, I didn't know you had to have a pass. I've been through here and never had one. I talked to one of you boys."

"Who'd you talk to?"

"Now, boys, I don't know his name, but he was wearing a brown coat." He is pleased with his identification and leans forward. The boys bunch together and talk low. The challenger leans forward and says, "Well, you can't go through here and you know it. We ain't letting anything by on this road. What he's doing, boys, is bootlegging milk from Lemars."

The old man comes up. "What do you do that for? Don't you know the milk agreement? All of us have milk we can't sell. Why don't you buy from us? Why don't you deal with the men who signed the agreement?"

"Now, boys, I've got all my milk bottled right here. I wanted to deal with a square shooter; but you take those fellows, they will hook you for every hook in the road. They'll knock you off."

"What about us?" says the challenger. "We're knocked off. Why don't you stick with us boys so we can hold our prices and sell."

"Boys, I'll go half way with you. I'm ready to do what's right. I'll go to the office tomorrow and fix it up and one of you can go with me and see I do, but this milk will be wasted if I don't get it in." He gets out and comes toward the boys, a little man with an anxious, apologetic face, not a producer, just a milk deliverer, crushed between the two stones. The boys are now showing signs of relenting. There is a split among themselves and there are no leaders. They are proud that they have no leaders. They bunch together now to argue it out and you can see their kindness—the civilized ability to put themselves in another man's

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

place—working on them. Against this is the tough quality of the upstanding old man, who is sure that nothing can come of benefit to any one without some hurt to some one.

"Now, you all have a say here; come up and let's decide this." They huddle together and you can hear the arguments against letting the man through gradually downed by a rising desire to let him through this once, for the last time. After all, he isn't a scab, he was on the picket line himself three weeks. They turn to him, and, relieved, he gets his truck going slowly up the hill. But the farmers are dissatisfied with themselves. They sit around, and two who held out for not letting him through have gone home disgusted. The talk goes back to their woes and unequal struggle. To the hogs that ought to go to market, but what's the use with the price two cents?

"I say, let's see how big a hog can grow. I got some 600 pounds right now, eating their heads off. I've got the corn and can't get a price for it, the hogs might as well have it."

Most of the men sitting around the fire own their own places. One is a farm hand. I know the names of these places and it is all good, ample land. One of the men is talking of a mortgage on his land for fifty dollars an acre. It is good land and able to raise sixty to seventy-five bushels to the acre. He can't pay his interest and they want to take his machinery, his crop, and his household goods in payment. He had better let his land go but if it was put upon sale it would only bring twenty-five dollars an acre. They could then get a deficiency judgment and sell up his household goods and his livestock to square the difference. He has fought this move. The farm is worth $20,000 but the $7000 mortgage is going to get it down.

The words "international bankers" leap out and every man responds to those words. They can see their farms ironed out by the big chain farms, the insurance companies capturing their land, themselves sold out as cheap farm labor.

"We shouldn't have let that fellow through," one of them says. They begin to talk of the night they drove back the deputies. Hundreds of cars lined the road in a few minutes. "The telephone girls are with us, they put the calls through. We can rouse the whole countryside in fifteen minutes." The tense way they talk, the cool night air, their determined faces, give you the feeling of Paul Revere rousing the countryside. They themselves bring in references continually to their own American Revolution. "We aren't so different from the Boston Tea Party, boys. Those fellows weren't keeping the law. If they had kept the law we would be tied to the skirts of Mother England now."

They like this argument because the talk of the town people piously saying that the picketing was not legal got under their skins. They had to find upstanding precedents for their action. They found plenty. They are not so sure that what the town people call "legal" means anything to them. Charley Dawes got his $80,000,000 in a legal way. The banks get their holiday in a legal way. A sheriff's sale down the road would have sold up a farmer and turned him out in the cold, and they saved him by getting around legality. They shook hands on it, turned out at his sale and the whole works didn't bring more than $14.75. They turned the money over to the bank and the bill of sale to the farmer. He didn't even have to move a stick of his furniture.

In the darkness they are looking ahead. They talk about perhaps picketing until the snow flies. They aren't going to give up without getting somewhere. "Partner," says the old man, "we are at the T in the road. We can't go back now." They are very sure at this moment that they will keep their stand and their sureness is not the excitable cockiness of men going off on a tangent. It has the reasonable quality of men who are calm because they are desperate.

A picket line out by the big Sioux Bridge is near the place where we used to picnic when I was a child. The fine road was gumbo then and it was commonplace to go up over the hub in rainy weather. Farmers came to lodge picnics at the park near the bridge. In those days every family was equipped with fried chicken in white cardboard shoe boxes. One farmer has a house near the place where I once stayed during the threshing season. The woman there set a pretty table with two kinds of pie at every meal. While the threshers ate at the long table, she walked behind them waving the fly chaser over their heads. One of the young fellows asks if I knew the postmistress at McCook was dead. We don't spend much time on memories.

The young fellow explains that the yeast of this movement is the young men. There are a number around who got some education, they've got a Notre Dame man and several Ames men. They won't stand for what the old people stood for, not that old people aren't coming in on the strike in a surprising way. They are the very meat in the broth. Everybody is worried about foreclosures. Not a fellow there isn't tied down with a mortgage or feed and seed loans. The government has them hand and foot. It compels them to pay off the loans in full before they can dispose of any of the crop. They need cash for taxes, and where is it coming from? They need cash for interest to the banks. Everywhere the cry for cash.

They discuss the attempts at legislation for the farmer but without any belief. Some one has just said that their vote isn't worth anything but their economic power is. It is the young man talking and the older fellows, crowding close, nod soberly. One man asks what I think of the expensive harness they have ordered for the Missouri. The rest laugh and the young man says it is a lie that fixing the Missouri will give work to any of them. "It will be like the roads. They brought in machines and we didn't get to use our teams even. They brought in men from the outside and nobody made anything but the construction company. It's all for the construction companies." Again as they talk you get the hint of a combine against these men and their definite feeling that they are up against a wall.

These farmers are good company and back in town, afterward, the talk sounds shallow. The town people are milling around getting sore because they say their city alone is being discriminated against. Quietly, under the surface, business men are beginning to put pressure on the proper spot. In the name of law and order they are pussyfooting to the governor. The threat of militia hangs in the air. One paper, out

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

for the farmer, has its advertising sharply cut. The business barometer has gone down all over the country, but the local men prefer to think that if picketing is ended things would take a sharp upward turn.

Their plots against the farmer are in sharp contrast to his open concern for them. "We are all in the same boat," the farmer says; "what is bad for us is bad for him." During the milk strike the strikers brought in milk confiscated on the highways to give away to the unemployed. Many well-to-do town families were not ashamed to drive up in cars to gobble up free milk when they could. In the beginning, restaurants shared food with the strikers and bakers contributed stale bread, but now that the movement shows signs of power they have withdrawn this support.

We would rather visit picket lines than see the inner workings of town life with its stale, corrupt hints. The Republicans want to think that the entire Farmers' Holiday movement is subsidized by the Democrats to break the Republican vote. They hint at paid pickets, with the curious doubt of anything done without pay. Money, that moves the town man's world, or political gain, must be back of every act. They crow at the dumb farmer, just the tool of parties and power.

They even explain the centralization of the strike area around Sioux City from the standpoint of petty politics. The proudest battle of the picket lines was fought at James. A thousand farmers turned back truckloads of deputies with guns levelled to shoot. In this spot the grasshopper and drought had hit hardest.

Look at the map and see that around Sioux City is the highest percentage of tenant farming. Rich State that Iowa is, its rate for the State is 54.6 per cent, but in the northwest area it is over 60 per cent. In that area also banks were most active in declaring arbitrary holidays and demanding waivers over deposits. Some have demanded five-year waivers. Such sound economic reasons do not satisfy the mind used to juggling with politics and deals. The town man will tell you that James was a hot spot because Milo Reno had a spite against Sioux County. Of course the town men rarely talk to farmers and did not visit picket lines. They really believe their little fables and live by them.

The fighting men at James were more in earnest and more grim than anywhere else. They had faced guns and tear gas and only one had fallen, their dog Rover. His grave, rounded in yellow clay, was by the road. A fence was around it and a sign over it. *"Here lies Rover, he died for the Farmers' Holiday."* A James farmer is standing by, a little grim. "If I fall by this road, I want to lie right there, too," he said. Another said, "That's the place for us all if we fall." "Looked like we'd all fall last week," a third said.

A dilapidated horse and buggy crossed the road in front of them. Some one yelled to stop him and laughed when he saw a kid driving the shaky structure. "Soon we'll all be going around in rigs like that," he said.

Another said, "Good thing if we had all stayed like that." But a third speaks up, "Why, they can take that thing away as soon as they can a farm." Across the road is the station of James and back of the station is a dirt road leading into the country where I taught school one spring. It was rich farm country and its school had been exploited by lazy teachers from the city. The teacher before me made the kids sing "Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush" for forty minutes until they were ready to drop while she wrote letters to her beau. The farmers were anxious to give their children a good education and ready to raise the salary of any teacher who could teach. In the farm home where I boarded the women and children all worked long hours. We all went to bed early every night. But the farms were rich and a good, self-respecting living went on in those houses, warmed by growing things around it.

Between the town of James and the bigger city there is hardly any country now. It is all town, spreading out to meet the country, like a huge sprawling spider. It lies there waiting to grab what the farmer brings to town, and many in that town in recent years have waxed fat on the farmer and have built brand new homes in new additions. The Chamber of Commerce tells you Sioux City is the shopping centre for eight times the number of people in it. It is the biggest hog-trucking centre in the world. The town has grown with tradesmen's homes reaching into the country, eating it up to the north of town, where a huge golf course awaits the leisured. Many of these houses are mortgaged and new additions have flattened more than one man taking a flier. The brand new houses are houses of cards in this period of depression.

Men picket roads all day and night, and in town busybodies are at work, honestly thinking their town is in danger, their business getting worse than it is, and all on account of the obstinate farmer. Papers begin to print misleading news about the roads, claiming that most of the roads are open. Picketers take time and investigate. But something soft is beginning to work from the top downward.

When 3000 men meet at The Golden Slipper Dance Hall you see their united protest against any weakening. A thousand crowd into the hall, and the overflow outside listen to speeches. They begin balloting as to whether picketing should continue. None but actual men on the line votes. Each is identified by two from his line; 420 votes are cast for continued picketing as against 210 opposed. This method keeps out the stockyards boys who are said to have come to break up the meeting.

I didn't hear a man talk against picketing or the movement that night. A man told me he and his wife couldn't starve, no matter what happened. They had put up 500 quarts of food that summer, but they had fifteen to feed. He sold cucumbers around and took what he could get. No one had money and he would even take an old pair of shoes. Other day he took a corset. He didn't know what he could do with it, but he took it.

During the evening one of the committee men tells me he could see this coming ten years ago. The banks were after you then to take bigger loans. If you asked for $500 they urged you to take $1000. They were always suggesting new barns or silos. Now it looks like a plot had been cooked up against the farmer and the government was in cahoots. This solid landowning man believes what he is telling me and he is mad clear through. He has been in the red for twelve years. He farmed 160

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

acres and just made ends meet. They were always talking production and so he got the idea that if he had more land and produced more, he could make something, so he reached for another 80. He could just clear the slate with that by being stingy and watching the pennies. So he tried for another 80 and now had 320. Now he had to have bigger machinery and he could still just make ends meet. So he reached out for 280 more. He was now farming 540 acres and last year had as pretty a field of wheat as you'll see. He took $260 out of his own pocket to get that wheat to an elevator and he might as well have thrown a match into it. He finally ground it up for his hogs.

He looks out the window and admires the sight of farmers getting together for the first time in history. A dozen times I am asked if I ever saw anything like this. Their delight in their solidarity, in numbers sticking together, is new. Or is it so new? The pioneer needed the help of his neighbors. Before the automobile a kind of group social life had sprung up among them. There were dancing in barns and big picnics in ravines. The automobile did away with a good deal of that. The farmer seemed heading toward prosperity, and a man on the make is always a lone wolf. In disaster he sticks to his kind. All of them? Well, a wealthy conservative farmer near Moville estimated that more than 80 per cent were with the Holiday movement. Around his place 24 per cent of the farms have fallen under the axe this last year. In twelve months, if something isn't done, all but thirty per cent of the farms will be foreclosed.

We talk to this man at the Moville Fair as the kids lead their sheep and beeves around a ring for judging. The kids have been taught to raise the finest animals. The farmer has learned to get the most from his soil. And he can't sell it for enough to pay for raising the stuff. This college-bred farmer also mentions that bogy, the international bankers.

"If they try to take their homes, they will fight," he says. Farmers are already planning ways to circumvent the sheriff. These people will stick together; even those who are still clear of debt see the handwriting on the wall. The farmer is not trusting the government much. His Farm Bureau has always prated more of his duties than of his rights. The only advice his State Agricultural College can give is to use gunny sacking for the lining of clothes.

No wonder that when Milo Reno at a meeting of 3000 farmers at Fremont, Nebraska, sharpens his speech to include remarks like this, "Don't let people scare you about a strike or being radical. If a man isn't radical today he hasn't enough red blood in his veins to stain a handkerchief. Take steps or lose your homes. This is your last stand. You'll either win or put on the wooden shoes"—they applaud fiercely, and you can be sure if Milo Reno has put that much in a speech it means that farm opinion is strides ahead of him.

The empty oratory of the governor's representative following him is flat in comparison. A farmer with pale blue eyes presses forward and raises an eloquent imploring hand. You feel his place is about to fall under the axe. "Can the governor do anything about a moratorium *now?*" The spokesman, face empty as a tea cup, says the governor can recommend a moratorium for mortgages and interest and he has every confidence that his recommendation will be respected. "But *now,*" the farmer says, insisting, and you know his farm is tottering. He is too old to wait. It must come Now, not Tomorrow. Against that *now* the ambling vacant promises fall and the farmer and the audience move away from them. They are trying to get out from under the threat of politics waiting to gobble their united strength.

They move off and in a meeting of their own, voice their suspicion of leadership. It is an organization meeting, and a minor issue of whether they shall charge dues of fifty cents becomes major in its import. A farmer with blazing eyes makes a speech.

"We thrashed that out in committee and we gave it the best thought we got. The best is none too good. We are dead set against dues. Twelve cents don't look like much but get a lot of men paying it and it amounts to a good deal. We don't want the money coming in tempting some one to set up a good office and a fine desk. First thing you know you've got some one you can't get rid of. Those fellows wear good clothes and I can't buy new overalls. I tell you I'm ready to fight. Fellow on the Farm Board says to me, 'What do you think of Friend Hoover now, course you're prejudiced.' I says, 'I ain't prejudiced, I'm damned mad now.' " He sits down. Why does the place ring with applause?

Suddenly, clearly and certainly you realize their scepticism in leadership, their belief in the dirt farmer and the rank and file. Now their continual assertion that "there are no leaders, we all got a say," takes on the most unmistakable meaning. A second farmer in a checked suit rises and urges that none but dirt farmers be admitted to membership. "Beware," he says, "of the wolves in sheep's clothing." Again you get their dread of leadership such as has weighted unions. These farmers are not pushed by any one, their phrases are their own, and they mean to keep a grip on their own business.

How will they succeed? As I write, Brookhart is already muscling in to capture the Farmers' Holiday movement. The leaders of that movement called off the picketing, but no one knows where the deep, spontaneous mass indignation against their loss of rights will spring up again. The shush-shush of town folks, the play of politics, the fear of militia have tamed the first expressive warning down. The town man is even trying to make out that the picket lines were manned by bums and paid agitators. The police, hauling in some hundred picketers, couldn't locate one bum. As for agitators, the farmers are themselves agitators now.

The town man would like to put the farmer back in his place, humbly serving. It will not be so easy. The affirmation of thousands of farmers at the Golden Slipper, at Fremont, at the big parade, at every picket line, wherever farmers meet together, will be too much for a politician's craw. At this minute the farmer is quoting Lincoln in behalf of his own cause which he feels to be righteous. He will point out to you that it is not only himself, it is the unemployed, and the hundreds of thousands of boys and girls, admitted by the Children's Bureau of the Department of Labor to be roaming the West in search of food, children out of work, riding

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

trains, homeless. Where are these straws blowing? The farmer knows that his picketing was more valuable as a demonstration than as an actual means of raising prices. He is talking of another demonstration in an American tradition, the covered wagon again on a migration, but this time to the East. In Washington he thinks his plight may seem more dramatic. And he will refer you to the demonstrations made by the now honorable John Brown and by members of the Boston Tea Party, for the farmer is a proud man and likes historical precedent for his actions.

STRAWS IN THE WIND

Significant notes in world affairs today

COLLEGE GIRL: 1932-33

By Eunice Fuller Barnard

The college girl is not, and probably never has been, that creature of popular myth—the blue stocking disdained by an elder generation or the silk stocking envied by our own. Instead, she is typically an eager-minded daughter of the people, bent on scholastic success to reward the sacrifices of her parents, and bound in almost nine-tenths of the cases to use her college education as a tool in wresting a living from an unpromising world.

Such at least is her picture as it emerges in a new survey made at six large Eastern women's colleges—Vassar, Smith, Radcliffe, Mount Holyoke, Barnard, Bryn Mawr—generally regarded as meccas for the daughters of the financially and culturally advantaged classes. Of the care-free college girl of fiction and hearsay, preoccupied with "proms" and clothes and sports, there is scarce a thoroughgoing sample. Beneath the glamour cast by the highly publicized gaieties of the campus one sees suddenly the average girl, ready if necessary to forego pleasure and to work her way with all the fortitude of a pioneer ancestor, and increasingly and critically interested both in the economic order and her own education.

This too is the "new" college girl, hailed this fall by presidents and deans as the product of the depression. Frequenting library and classroom with fresh avidity, and scoring higher academic marks, she is thought suddenly to have become a reformed character. But what actually has changed, if this new survey may be trusted, is not so much her nature as our view. By emphasizing the plight of the unprivileged, the depression has drawn our gaze from the daughters of leisure on the campus to the majority type. And that type was reported last summer by Professor Harriet Hayes of Teachers College, Columbia University, after a study of 125 colleges in all parts of the country, as coming from a family with an income not exceeding $3000 a year.

What the depression has done, on the campus and off, is to make this average girl more generally recognized and respected and to give her more scope. More completely than at any time in the past half century, a girl is permitted to be proud of an interest in the main business of college, of studying, working and thinking, with an eventual vocational objective. Several girls, in answering the questionnaire of this latest survey, added comments on the new "genuineness" of campus life. As a Smith College senior put it, "The general college atmosphere seems to be much more serious and studious. Now people study and admit it. Formerly they attempted to keep up a non-studious, care-free exterior at least."

Indeed the whole survey, containing the comments of 744 juniors and seniors, gives an unusual insight not only into the problems of the "forgotten" girl in the Eastern women's colleges but into her attitude toward them. Had it been intended to combat the casual view of college as a four-year house-party for the idle rich it could hardly have been more cogent.

Eighty-nine per cent of these girls answered unequivocally that they hoped to be self-supporting on graduation or soon after. And for only six per cent did this represent any new necessity (caused by the depression or otherwise) or any change of the expectation with which they entered college. By an overwhelming majority, therefore, these girls had always intended to be breadwinners in their own right. College for them had never been a finishing school, but rather a prelude to a vocation.

Though no question was asked on the subject, a few even volunteered the information that their earning was not a temporary measure or a stop-gap before matrimony. Half a dozen Vassar seniors and several from other colleges who planned to be married immediately on graduation added specifically that they expected to earn their share of the family budget. "Yes, I expect to support myself to a large extent," wrote one of these. "I could live with my parents, but would rather marry and work."

"I don't expect entirely to support myself," offered another, "but am anxious to earn as much as possible because I want to save to get married. I may also work after marriage."

For a surprising number of these girls too, self-support is no new thing. "I expect to support myself after graduation," wrote a Barnard senior. "I am doing so entirely at present. All spare time is devoted to productive work to enable me to continue in college. I have spent no money on books, using the library exclusively. I have spent nothing on amusement, practically nothing on medical attention, and under fifty dol-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lars on clothes in over a year. It is with the determination born of desperation that I continue, hoping that somehow I will see it through." And this is not an isolated case. Numbers of girls voluntarily remarked that they had given up all outside activities and pleasures to earn their way in college. "I have always earned my own spending money since seventh-grade days," declared one.

Women's colleges are not, and probably never have been, sunny sanctuaries of leisure. According to the most recent estimate by Doctor A. B. Crawford of Yale University, not less than a third of all the women college students in the country must now earn at least a part of their expenses. And that is probably an under rather than an over statement of the fact.

Doctor Hayes from her survey of 125 colleges, already mentioned, reported that the girl who earns in college is the majority type. In that class also fall at least half of the 878 freshmen in Hunter College, the municipal college for women in New York City, even though they have the advantages of practically free tuition, and usually of living at home. And this higher percentage has long held true, apparently, in the land-grant colleges, according to the government survey of their women graduates, just analyzed by the Institute of Women's Professional Relations. These figures show that even ten years ago 53 per cent of 4604 women students filling out a general questionnaire were doing some sort of remunerative work. And this represented a progressive increase over the first classes sampled in 1889–1892, when 32.3 per cent were partially self-supporting.

As the colleges have increased in size, the proportion of students contributing to their expenses has, as the report points out, shot up to previously unknown heights. The conclusion is inescapable that the vast influx of students in the post-war years has been not so much from the leisure class as from those less privileged.

Along with her larger numbers, the student with small means has gained progressively more financial help from the colleges east and west and a better social status. And the depression, in spite often of increasing her need, has nevertheless aided her in both these upward climbs. The so-called co-operative house, in which students are able to save from a fourth to a half of the living cost in an ordinary dormitory by doing a part of their own housekeeping, has risen during the past few years from a humble annex of campus life to a centre of social prestige.

In several colleges lately there has been almost as keen competition for places in these houses as for invitations to join campus clubs. At Mount Holyoke, for instance, the applications for admission to the two new co-operative houses opened by the college this fall were so far in excess of the accommodations that the selection, like that of the Rhodes scholars in the men's colleges, was finally made on the basis of high academic standing and extra-curricular activity. Already the co-operatives are becoming "honor" houses, with officers of the community government, members of varsity sports teams, dramatic and glee clubs and winners of academic awards among the residents.

Wellesley too is opening a very beautifully appointed co-operative house this winter, superior probably in modern devices for comfort and efficiency of operation to any other of its dormitories. Smith College is increasing its co-operative facilities; Boston University opened a new house last year; Wisconsin University has found the plan so successful among the women undergraduates that it is starting a similar house for men. Professor Hayes in her general survey found fourteen colleges which have adopted the system, in two of which the students in the co-operative houses themselves select their new members as in a sorority. And this fall since her study was made, at least two other colleges—Alabama College and MacMurray College in Illinois—have been added to the list.

This is but one of the ways in which the depression has acted to speed the inevitable democratizing process in the colleges. It has made the administrative officers more keenly aware of the problems of the student of small means. It has made them realize that, as a survey at Mount Holyoke of working students' academic grades graphically showed, opportunities for self-help are most effective when offered by the college itself as part of the regular régime. It has also made far more acute the college's responsibility for giving scholarship aid.

But again this is a recognition brought by the depression of a condition that antedated it, and that will continue after it. For five years, says a statement from Bryn Mawr, the number of applicants for scholarships has been greatly increasing, till they are now far in excess of the scholarships available. At least a third of the undergraduates it estimates to be in need of some financial assistance.

Even the new Bennington College at Bennington, Vt., sometimes spoken of as "a rich girls' college" because it has the highest tuition charge in the country, is actually giving reduced fees —practically scholarships—to half its student body. And in spite of this assistance a quarter of the girls have applied for opportunities for self-help, which the college is furnishing by way of jobs in library and dining room. Similarly Smith College, whose enrollment this year is five per cent below that of last, could have had as many qualified students as usual had it possessed the means to give scholarships to those who could not come without them.

It is notable, moreover, that in the public appeal for funds for the seven large Eastern women's colleges, made last summer by a committee consisting of Owen D. Young, Thomas W. Lamont, Newton D. Baker, Bernard M. Baruch, James Byrne, and Bishop Lawrence, a million dollars for scholarships led all other needs on the list of each college.

For the modern college girl, the future appears particularly blank and alarming. Not only has the depression depleted the supply of jobs in general, but she finds herself, so far as the vocational prospects of the college-educated woman are concerned, at the end of a cycle. The respectable, tried occupations that have served such women these several generations—teaching, nursing, stenography, library work—suddenly are crowded to the doors. And the younger generation must find new shelters.

Moreover, the college degree alone is no longer a passport to a job. "Today," declares the Smith College personnel office with the voice of doom, "there are

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

practically no paid occupations open to the graduate who possesses only her A.B." Girls and their parents who have sacrificed comforts and pleasures in the expectation that college would provide an immediate and superior vocational start, are beginning to turn critically upon the liberal arts curriculum.

Already in the past year this attitude has had expression in the student body of several colleges. In answering a questionnaire at Mount Holyoke last spring, 100 sophomores, or more than three-eighths of those replying, suggested some form of vocational training as the most needed addition to the course of study. At Smith a number of girls petitioned to substitute more practical courses for those of a cultural nature which they had previously elected.

In the replies from the six colleges in the latest survey the lack of such courses or the failure to take advantage of such as there were, was a frequent plaint. "This year," wrote a senior, "has made me realize the futility of plunging into a college education with a vague idea of obtaining 'culture' and with little or no idea about how to prepare for a vocation in the quickest and least expensive way. I regret the time I have spent in jumping from one subject to another without specializing."

"I am not so optimistic in regard to being able to support myself now as I was when I entered college," mourned another. "Furthermore, I think a college mind is not esteemed as highly as it once was."

Some of the critics were more acid. "I had never intended," declared one, "to waste four years at a place which did not prepare one to fill a position later." Still another indicted the whole system. "College does not prepare one for anything useful," she wrote, "and leads people gradually into an easy and extravagant way of living. Just before graduation usually, if not before, when the realization comes that a living has to be earned, the waste of time and money that college has been impresses itself fully upon the majority of people."

The imminence of trying for a job, the necessity of retaining a scholarship, and the urge to justify a family's sacrifice in educating them were the reasons given by a large proportion of the 69 per cent of the upper-classmen from the six colleges who said they were taking study more seriously than formerly. A minority, on the other hand, attributed their increased earnestness to their own greater maturity, to greater interest or difficulty in the subjects studied, to the desire to win honors, or to the fact that it was their last chance at consecutive study.

Most arresting of all the trends that emerged from the answers, however, was the greater interest which two-thirds of the girls professed in economics, and which they amplified in many cases by remarks about their pet social and political reforms. These, indeed, outnumbered all other types of information volunteered. "I shall endeavor to keep an open mind about economic changes and shall try to work for a new order," is a sample comment. "I have always been conscious of the injustice of the present order."

In this, as in no other aspect of the college girl's attitude, a change can be noted that seems mainly and definitely attributable to the depression. "My interest in political, economic, and social reorganization has increased—has almost risen from nothing—during the past year," declared one student. "I am interested in finding some way to change general conditions. I hope to work in some society for peace."

"More interested? Yes," replied another who had several echoes among the answers. "Because it seems as if our generation ought to know something about economics to avoid the mistakes of the preceding one." Several girls professed an increased interest in the labor movement and in socialism. One added, "I now go to political meetings and those of the League for Industrial Democracy that I used to avoid."

Another is apparently enough of a convert to be willing to saw off the capitalistic limb on which she sits. "I am interested in economics solely as a basis for arguing socialism," she comments. "The bank watches my stocks."

Going at least, if not gone, is the tradition that the college girl, like her sister of the finishing school, majors in the politer arts. In all these colleges the girls seem realistic, keen, eager to come to grips with life. At Mount Holyoke last year economics was the leading major with both sophomores and seniors, and at Vassar the enrollment in economics courses had grown almost 20 per cent since 1929.

The full effect of the depression is shown in the fact that almost two-thirds of the girls who answered these questions reported that they had reduced their personal expenses and had given up social pleasures to an appreciable extent. College girls, in other words, like the world outside, have had to alter their standard of living. As an official of still another New England college succinctly put it, "Tea rooms and inns near the college report less business, showing that the girls are learning to content themselves with rice pudding in the college dining room, rather than going out for a sundae."

But in many cases this curtailment of off-campus dining, week-ends, theatre and movie going has been due to lack of time as well as of money. Pleasures have been given up because study has been serious, rather than study taken up because money for pleasures has been lacking—at least so the girls themselves believe.

Through many of the answers, indeed, gleams a kind of patient stoicism, as far as possible from the popular modern picture of flaming youth. Many a girl explains that she is not spending any less now than formerly because she has always had to limit herself to the bare essentials. "All my life," writes one, "I have given up social pleasures because of lack of time and money." Lack of invitations and lack of company are other reasons advanced for failing to take part in the social round, which strike strangely on the ear, coming, as they do, from girls surrounded literally by hundreds of their contemporaries.

Several girls also aver that they prefer to spend their time in other ways. "I devote less time to social pleasures because they no longer interest me as much," declares one world-weary twenty-year-old. "I have outgrown them. I do not need to be entertained."

A few girls have cut down their expenditures from motives of altruism rather than necessity. "I am not spending nearly as much on personal things,"

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

writes a Vassar girl who plans to be a social worker, "because since the depression I have come to realize that they are not essential, and I have given the money to unemployment relief, etc. I am, however, planning a trip to Russia, England, and Ireland next summer. It is to be done as cheaply as possible but will of course be expensive. I am doing this because I feel that with a wider horizon I can do more good when I start to work."

Even the girls who have not cut down their pleasures have a definite philosophy in the matter, or at least have taken the trouble to rationalize their course to themselves. (The majority of the questionnaires were filled out anonymously so that there is no suspicion of answers being given for their effect on the faculty reader.) "I have made no marked change in regard to pleasures," declares a senior. "I have felt that the social side of my personality needs rounding out." Another whose attitude is more reminiscent of George Washington's youthful maxims than of the "jazz age," remarks: "I have always balanced my time so as to have the proper amount of work and play."

Still another regrets that a thin pocketbook has made retrenchment on week-ends necessary. "If one has an attractive week-end in view, one *makes* the time to get the work done beforehand," she explains sagely. A senior in the same college who shares this viewpoint apparently, has even gone to the extent of earning money to pay for week-ends that she must otherwise have foregone. "My week-ends seem essential to my general state this year," she comments. "There is so much 'in the air' that vitally concerns me."

But whatever its effect upon the pleasures of the moment, the depression has probably in the long run done the college girl a service. It has revealed her as a soberer and a wiser if a less plutocratic person than has been contemplated in the more or less lurid pictures we have made of her. It has shown her to be, like her high school sister, the intellectually or vocationally aspiring daughter of our all-embracing middle class. It has, in other words, released her from the patterns in which we had insisted on thinking of her, and is giving her a chance to create one of her own.

MILITARY MEDICINE MEN

By Alva Lee

Lieut.-Col., U. S. Army, retired

To what happy hunting ground has vanished that mighty tribe of gifted prophets which a brief few months ago was so busily engaged with tongue and pen, picturing to an avid public a complete change of tactics, strategy, and weapons to be employed in the next war? While disclaiming all knowledge as to their present whereabouts, the writer expresses the sincere hope that all such have confused the trail (as invariably they did their reasoning) and have awakened to find themselves tending the basement furnace in the old-time Baptist hell. True, their misdirected efforts were not instigated by intent to do harm. But should we lose our next war there would be little satisfaction in knowing we had done so through ignorance. The reparations would be just as great as though we lost for other reasons. And make no mistake, if these military seers had their way about it the armed strength of the United States long since would have been reduced enormously by adoption of their pet ideas.

Let us epitomize these theories and study the result in the light of the demonstration recently staged, for all to see, in Manchuria and Shanghai. In other words, they told us in detail *what would occur* in the next war. Let us check and see *what actually did occur*. Their arguments have varied, but without exception they have agreed that aircraft would be the all-important weapon of the future, augmented by tanks on land and submarines at sea, thus relegating to the scrap heap and the museum such antiquated instruments of death and destruction as the infantry rifle and the battleship. Old-fashioned fleets would be sent to the bottom by modern fleets consisting of airplane carriers and zeppelins, assisted by submarines. The war then would be brought to a victorious conclusion by an all-powerful air invasion of enemy territory. Certainly a safe, easy, and picturesque method of waging war? And cheap too.

However, there is nothing an admiral commanding a well-balanced fleet would like so much as to find opposed to him an enemy fleet consisting of aircraft carriers, zeppelins, and submarines. He could hoist one signal, "Close with the enemy," and retire to his cabin feeling perfectly certain of the outcome, and with the additional satisfaction of knowing he would suffer little loss in winning his victory. He knows that his fleet is practically invulnerable to attack from the air, and of course he does not have gun fire to fear. He bases this confidence to considerable extent upon results attained in the World War. *No damage of any appreciable sort was inflicted on naval vessels by either German or Allied aircraft.* This war record has been confirmed by peace-time experiments. He can remember when the redoubtable General Mitchell attempted to sink certain old-time war vessels in Chesapeake Bay. He had two weeks to assemble his air armada, plan his attack, and execute it. What happened? Practically nothing! He swooped down with his airplanes, not once or twice but dozens of times, and released bombs by the hundred. No results! Finally in desperation he came down within two hundred feet (which was feasible enough inasmuch as the targets were not shooting back) and did place a hit or two. But the poor old helpless hulks managed to stay comfortably afloat. Under the same conditions, the youngest midshipman at Annapolis in command of a ten-oared cutter could have towed out a half dozen torpedoes and accomplished twice the damage in one-half the time.

The admiral in his cabin pondering these things and many other substantiating facts would feel as assured and pleased with his lot as the cat locked in the cage with the canary. Should the hostile aircraft come close enough to inflict any damage at all on his tough old battleships he knows they will suffer terrific losses themselves. Two or three such attacks and his smaller air force will be more than their match. In the meantime he is proceeding under full

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

steam straight for the enemy. And the enemy fleet is retreating just as speedily as possible toward its nearest base, *i.e.*, toward the nearest base protected by old-fashioned artillery. But in this race the carriers are sadly handicapped. The aircraft, what is left of them, having dropped their eggs must return to the fleet to replenish. This is a long, arduous, nerve-wracking task (in a rough sea an impossible task) and the hostile battleship fleet draws nearer and nearer. Eventually the pursuing fleet comes within range, in which case the carriers are promptly sunk by old-fashioned gun fire, or the air fleet gains the shelter of its base, in which case it is bottled up.

True, the battleship fleet might suffer some damage from submarines, but modern battleships under full head of steam are not in much danger from submarines. On the other hand, submarines are quite vulnerable to depth charges.

Recently I read a most entertaining magazine article by George Sylvester Viereck describing the next war, in which the United States was defeated and sued for peace twenty-four hours after hostilities commenced. The enemy depended entirely upon aircraft. Massing a huge armada of superplanes—many of them piloted by robots—they intrepidly flew the Atlantic, and, crossing Canada from Newfoundland, attacked Chicago. In an hour or less the city was completely razed and all inhabitants killed. The enemy then blithely flew back home, and, let us hope, to a well-deserved, hearty supper, or whatever it is robots prefer after such a full day's work. The American commander-in-chief, in his dugout at Washington, realizing that his old-fashioned army and navy were utterly helpless against this modern invader, promptly wirelessed his unconditional surrender.

Now this may be highly amusing to informed readers, but the great majority of the American public is woefully lacking in judgment on subjects military. A certain number are inclined to believe that such a wild fantasy is possible. Thus is moulded public opinion, which in turn rules Congress. And Congress makes the big decisions regarding our military policy in times of peace, leaving the chestnuts to be pulled out of the fire by the general staff of the army and the general board of the navy after war is declared. The writer is sincere in his belief that ordinary hell is entirely too good for writers who combine vivid imagination with such gross ignorance on the subject of national defense, and for publishers who accept and peddle such absurdities.

To turn from the theoretical picture of what war would be to what actually it is, study the conduct of the war so recently waged in and about Shanghai. Was the strategy changed? No. The principles of strategy have remained the same down through the ages. (Compare the battle of Canne with the battle of Mazurian Lakes.) Were tactics changed? No. Tactics are constantly being modified, as new weapons are developed and new defenses employed, but the general underlying principles change very little from year to year or from one war to the next. Were weapons different? No. Same old weapons used in the last war, used in the same manner and with the same general effect. Did aircraft dominate the fighting? Did the tank play an important rôle? Was any city razed by high explosives dropped from the air? Certainly not.

If ever there was a set-up perfectly designed to demonstrate air supremacy, the conflict at Shanghai was such. The conditions were these: China with a disorganized and bankrupt government, an army ill-trained and poorly led, equipped with small arms and artillery but with practically no aircraft. Opposed to her was Japan with a strong, well-financed central government, a highly trained and efficiently led army, equipped with every modern weapon, including aircraft and tanks. Her home base was distant only five hundred miles. Owing to absolute supremacy at sea, she was able to establish her advance base only a few miles from her objective. Could any air enthusiast ask for a better situation than that? Japan has one of the best and most efficient air forces in the world. General Mitchell, in an article published on January 30 last, says so. Furthermore, he insists that: The Japanese are excellent fliers; their planes and equipment the latest and best (much better than those of the United States); they are air-minded and determined to use this new weapon almost to the exclusion of any other because they know it will be the deciding factor in any engagement along the coast of Asia.

So much for the general situation and for the theory. What actually happened was that the Japanese attack along a fifteen-mile front, preceded by heavy artillery preparation and pushed stubbornly day after day, was halted despite numerous tanks, a preponderance of artillery and a plethora of airplanes. And the same factor caused this halt that decided every land battle of the World War. *Infantry*. The Chinese army at Shanghai had only one point of superiority over the Japanese army —*a larger force of infantry*. This alone was responsible for frustrating the Japanese in attaining their objective. Three weeks later, reinforced by two infantry divisions, Japan accomplished a crushing victory. Granted that in the piping times of peace infantry plays an unimportant rôle, no sooner are the dogs of war unleashed than it takes its proper place as the "Corps d'Elite" and is so recognized by all participating arms and branches—until peace again is concluded. Ask the man who went to France.

It need not have taken this war in the Orient to have proved the fallacies of the all-air enthusiast. For those who think for themselves, and can remember, the results attained in the World War were quite conclusive, results which are history, well known to all and sundry, and which should be entirely sufficient to form definite opinion. Unfortunately, such is not the case. Wild fantasies of the imagination, dressed up as theories of conduct for future wars, are much more alluring than are the cold, prosaic, actual conditions. War correspondents (a sadly over-rated class) are responsible in no small measure for common misconception about the functions and effectiveness of the various arms of the service. In their enthusiasm for sensational stories they pick out only that which will fire the imagination, regardless of its true importance. From 1914 to 1917 the American public was fed stories of the unbelievable effectiveness of heavy artillery, the air force, and, later, the tanks. Why? Because such weapons readily appeal to the imagination of both correspondent and reader. Infantry hidden in the mud or advancing as inconspicuously as possible is not an

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

inspiring sight nor is its effectiveness readily discernible. Nevertheless, no land battle is won unless the infantry moves forward, nor lost unless the infantry moves to the rear. Verdun is the perfect example. The Germans concentrated a preponderance of artillery and dominated the air from first to last but were unable to employ more than an equal number of infantry. Infantry on the defense has a decided advantage over an equally strong attacking force. And it was this infantry advantage which kept the Germans from passing.

Wide-spread delusions, regarding the effectiveness of new weapons, are not novel. When the crossbow was invented the same propaganda affected public opinion. And I remember as a boy reading accounts of what would happen in the "next war," wherein an old-fashioned army would be completely wiped out by a force consisting of a platoon armed with a dozen Gatling guns (the papa and mamma of the machine gun). The majority of readers can remember those inspiring accounts from 1905 to 1914 describing the awful destructiveness of air fleets of the future.

"But the situation has entirely changed," retorts the air-minded zealot. "Aviation has made unbelievable strides during the past fourteen years. It is now many times as effective as it was during the World War." This commonly accepted answer deserves careful investigation. What revolutionary improvement has materialized since 1918? None known to the writer. Minor improvements, yes. Scores of them. Planes are somewhat faster, more substantially built, will carry more load and have a greater cruising radius. (Trucks and tractors have improved to about the same extent.) But note also that anti-aircraft has advanced remarkably since 1918. Of the two, I believe the antis have gone considerably farther. If this be true, and events at Shanghai indicate just that, it means aircraft will be less effective in the next war than it was in the last.

Tanks are over-advertised for about the same reasons as aircraft. They are spectacular, can perform curious and startling feats and, in appearance, give an impression of immense power and staying qualities. Their undeniable weakness is *vulnerability*. They cannot take cover but must advance in the open. A few pieces of light artillery, properly placed, should be able to put tanks out of action as fast as they appear. New and ingenuous defense measures such as tank traps and land mines add to their difficulties. Nevertheless, it may be said of the tank that "it is an experiment noble in motive," the motive being to aid the infantry attack. More power to them. Their real worth remains to be seen. They played an insignificant rôle at Shanghai.

Nothing herein written implies that aircraft, tanks, and other new devices and weapons serve no useful purpose in warfare. The quarrel is with those fanatics who would have the lay public believe that these new and spectacular weapons are all-important. They are not. Infantry still decides the fate of land battles, and its most important supporting arm is the artillery. Aircraft has several useful functions, the most important being to secure information. As the "eyes of the army," from a long distance up in the air, it is most useful. As an important weapon of offense and defense it is a complete dud.

Why would it not be a wise, even if novel, policy for us to leave such matters as the composition of the army to the general staff and of the navy to the general board? They are best qualified by selection, education, training and experience to make such decisions. In practically all other countries of the world they do make them. Congress, determining appropriations, properly should decide how much protection is desired. But for laymen to usurp the functions of experts by making decisions as to relative strength of the various arms and branches, or to dictate as to classes of ships, etc., is a grave weakness in our system of administration, a weakness hidden until war is upon us and then glaringly apparent to all.

WAR IN BOHEMIA

By Malcolm Cowley

The war in Europe was hardly over, the treaty of peace was still unsigned, when a bloodless war burst forth in America. On the one side were the beleaguered inhabitants of Greenwich Village. On the other side, in the attitude of aggressors, were several of the larger American magazines, as led and conveniently typified by *The Saturday Evening Post.*

The Post, like a dozen other periodicals, brought heavy and light artillery to bear on its new enemies. It published stories about the Villagers, editorials and articles against them, grave or flippant novels dealing with their customs in a mood of disparagement or alarm, humorous pieces done to order by its staff writers, cartoons in which the Villagers were depicted as long-haired men and short-haired women with ridiculous bone-rimmed spectacles —in all, a long campaign of polemic beginning before the Jazz Decade and continuing through the boom and the depression probably into the six issues now on the press. The burden of it was always the same: that the Village was the haunt of affectation; that it was inhabited by fools and fakers; that the fakers hid Moscow heresies under the disguise of cubism and free verse; that the fools would eventually be cured of their folly; they would forget this funny business about art and return to domesticity in South Bend, Ind., and sell automobiles. The Village was dying, had died already, smelled to high heaven and Philadelphia. . . .

The Villagers themselves, by no means moribund, did not answer this attack directly; instead they carried on a campaign of their own against the culture represented by the 3,000,000 readers of *The Saturday Evening Post.* They performed autopsies and wrote obituaries on civilization in the United States; they shook the standardized dust of the country from their feet. Here, apparently, was a symbolic struggle, with the great megaphones of middle-class America trying to howl down the American disciples of art and artistic living. Here, in its latest incarnation, was the eternal warfare of bohemian against bourgeois, poet against propriety—Villon and the Bishop of Orleans, Keats and the quar-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

terly reviewers, Rodolphe, Mimi and the unescapable landlord. But perhaps, if we glance at the history of the struggle, we shall find that the issue was other than it seemed and the enmity less ancient.

Alexander Pope, two centuries before, had taken the side of property and propriety in a similar campaign against the slums of art. When writing "The Dunciad" and the "Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot," he lumped all his enemies together, stingy patrons, homosexual peers, hair-splitting pedants; but he reserved his best considered insults for the garret dwellers of Grub Street, the dramatists whose lives were spent dodging the bailiff, the epic poets "lulled by a zephyr through the broken pane." These he accused of slander, dullness, theft, bootlicking, ingratitude, every outrage to man and the Muses; almost the only charge he did not press home against them was that of affectation. They were not play-acting their poverty. The threadbare Miltons of his day were rarely the children of prosperous parents; they could not go home to Nottingham or Bristol and earn a comfortable living by selling hackney coaches; if they "turned a Persian tale for half a crown," it was usually because they had no other means of earning half a crown and so keeping themselves out of debtors' prison. And the substance of Pope's attack against them is simply that they were poor, that they belonged to a class beneath his own, without inherited wealth; that they did not keep a gentleman's establishment, or possess a gentleman's easy manners, or the magnanimity of a gentleman sure of tomorrow's dinner:

> Yet then did Gildon draw his venal quill:
> I wished the man a dinner, and sat still.
> Yet then did Dennis rave in furious fret:
> I did not answer,—I was not in debt.

Pope was a far wittier poet than any of his adversaries, but the forces he brought against them were not those of wit or poetry alone: behind him, massed in reserve, was all the prejudice of eighteenth-century gentlefolk against intruders into the polite world of letters. He was fighting a literary class-war, and one which left deep wounds. To many a poor scribbler, it meant the difference between starvation and the roast of mutton he lovingly appraised in a bake-shop window and promised himself to devour if his patron sent him a guinea: after "The Dunciad" patrons closed their purses. Pope had inflicted a defeat on Grub Street but—the distinction is important—he had left Bohemia untouched, for the simple reason that Queen Anne's and King George's London had no Bohemia to defeat.

Grub Street is as old as the trade of letters; in Alexandria, in Rome, it was already a crowded quarter; Bohemia originated in France, not England, and the approximate date of its birth was 1830: thus, it followed the rise of French capitalism after the Napoleonic wars. The French Romantic poets complained of feeling oppressed—perhaps it was, as Musset believed, the fault of that great Emperor whose shadow fell across their childhood; perhaps it was Science, or the Industrial Revolution, or merely the money-grubbing, the stuffy morals and stupid politics of the people about them; in any case they had to escape from middle-class society into a world above and below it, a world in which they cherished aristocratic delusions while living among carpenters and midinettes. The first inhabitants of this world were the friends of Théophile Gautier and Gérard de Nerval, young men of good family with a high respect for their own moods and scarlet waistcoats and beribboned lobsters; but the legend of it was spread abroad, some twenty years later, by a poor hack named Henry Murger, the son of a German immigrant to Paris.

Murger was penniless. Having abandoned all hopes of a formal education when he left primary school, and feeling no desire to follow his father's trade of tailor, he began to write mediocre verse and paint incredible pictures, meanwhile supporting himself by his wits. Soon he joined a group which called itself the Water Drinkers, because it could rarely afford another beverage. A dozen young men with no money, little talent and vast ambitions, they lived in hovels or in lofts over a cow stable, worked under the lash of hunger, and wasted their few francs in modest debauchery. One winter they had a stove for the first time: it was a hole cut in the floor, through which the animal heat of the stable rose into their chamber. They suffered from the occupational diseases of poor artists—consumption, syphilis, pneumonia—all of them aggravated by undernourishment. Joseph Desbrosses died in the winter of 1844; he was an able sculptor, possibly the one genius of the group. His funeral was the third in six weeks among the Water Drinkers, and they emptied their pockets to buy a wooden cross for the grave. When the last sod thumped down, the gravediggers stood waiting for their tip. There was not a sou in the party.

"That's all right," said the gravediggers generously, recognizing the mourners. "It will be for the next time."

Spring came and their feeling rose with the mercury. One evening when his friends were making war maps in water color, Murger began unexpectedly to tell them stories. They listened, chuckled, and roared for two good hours, till somebody advised him, seriously between gales of laughter, to abandon poetry for fiction. A little later he followed this advice, writing about the life of his friends, the only life he knew. Personally he hated this existence on the cold fringes of starvation, and planned to escape from it as soon as ever he could, but for the public he tried to render it attractive.

In "Scènes de la Vie de Bohème," he succeeded beyond his ambition. He succeeded not only in writing a popular book, one which was translated into a dozen languages, successfully dramatized, candied into an opera, one which enabled its author to live in bourgeois comfort, but also in changing an image in the public mind. Contemptible Grub Street, the haunt of apprentices and failures and Henry Murger, was transformed into glamorous Bohemia. The temporary expedient became a permanent way of life, became a cult with rituals and costumes, a doctrine adhered to not only by artists, old and young, rich and poor, but also by stockbrokers and dentists craving self-expression.

The religion spread. It had new prophets, some of them English, like Du Maurier and Leonard Merrick; it had new saints, like Baudelaire, Dowson, Verlaine. Having colonized a whole quarter of Paris, it founded new bishoprics in Munich, Berlin, London,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and finally New York. It carried on a long warfare with conventional society, but at the same time was tempting more and more good bourgeois to become its adherents. By the end of the War, when the American magazines launched their counter-offensive, a curious phenomenon was to be observed—namely, that the New York Bohemians, the Greenwich Villagers, came from exactly the same social class and had the same economic standards as the readers of *The Saturday Evening Post.*

Having come to Greenwich Village to escape the stultifying effects of a civilization ruled by business, many of them entered business themselves. They opened tea shops, antique shops, book shops, yes, and bridge parlors, dance halls, night clubs, and real-estate offices. By hiring shop assistants, they became the exploiters of labor. If successful, they tried to expand their one restaurant into a chain of restaurants, all with a delightfully free and intimate atmosphere, but run on the best principles of business accounting. Some of them leased houses, remodelled them into studio apartments, and raised the rents three or four hundred per cent to their new tenants. Others clung faithfully to their profession of painting or writing, rose in it slowly, and at last had their stories or illustrations accepted by *Collier's* or *The Saturday Evening Post.* There were occasions, I believe, when Greenwich Village writers were editorially encouraged to write stories making fun of the Village, and some were glad to follow the suggestion. Of course they complained, when slightly tipsy, that they were killing themselves—but how else could they maintain their standard of living? What they really meant was that they could not live like *Vanity Fair* readers without writing for *The Saturday Evening Post.*

And so it was they lived, if they had the money. They bought houses in the country, preferably not too far from the Sound; they collected highboys, lowboys, and tester beds; they hired butlers; they joined the local Hunt and rode in a red coat across New England stone fences and through wine-red sumacs in pursuit of a bag of imported anise-seed. In the midst of these new splendors, they continued to bewail the standardization of American life, while the magazines continued their polemic against Greenwich Village. You suspected that some of the Villagers themselves, even those who remained below Fourteenth Street, were not indignant at a publicity which brought tourists to the Pirates' Den and customers to Ye Olde Curiowe Shoppe and increased the value of the land in which a few of them had begun to speculate. The whole thing seemed like a sham battle. Yet beneath it was a real conflict of ideas, one which would soon affect the customs of a whole country.

Greenwich Village was not only a place, a mood, a way of life: like all Bohemias, it was also a doctrine. Since the days of Gautier and Murger, this doctrine had remained the same in spirit, but it had changed in several details. By 1920, it had become a system of ideas which could roughly be summarized as follows:

1. The idea of salvation by the child.—Each of us at birth has special potentialities which are slowly crushed and destroyed by a standardized society and mechanical methods of teaching. If a new educational system can be introduced, one by which children are encouraged to develop their own personalities, to blossom freely like flowers, then the world will be saved by this new, free generation.

2. The idea of self-expression.—Each man's, each woman's, purpose in life is to express himself, to realize his full individuality through creative work and beautiful living in beautiful surroundings.

3. The idea of paganism.—The body is a temple in which there is nothing unclean, a shrine to be adorned for the ritual of love.

4. The idea of living for the moment.—It is stupid to pile up treasures which we can enjoy only in old age, when we have lost the capacity for enjoyment. Better to seize the moment as it comes, to dwell in it intensely, even at the cost of future suffering. Better to live extravagantly, gather June rosebuds, "burn our candle at both ends."

5. The idea of liberty.—Every law, convention or rule of art that prevents self-expression or the full enjoyment of the moment should be shattered and abolished. Puritanism is the great enemy. The crusade against Puritanism is the only crusade with which free individuals are justified in allying themselves.

6. The idea of female equality.—Women should be the economic and moral equals of men. They should have the same pay, the same working conditions, the same opportunity for drinking, smoking, taking or dismissing lovers.

7. The idea of psychological adjustment.—We are unhappy because we are maladjusted, and maladjusted because we are repressed. If our individual repressions can be removed—by confessing them to a Freudian psychologist—then we can adjust ourselves to any situation, and be happy in it. (But Freudianism is only one method of adjustment. What is wrong with us may be our glands, and by a slight operation, or merely by taking a daily dose of thyroid, we may alter our whole personalities. Again, we may adjust ourselves by some such psychophysical discipline as is taught by Gurdjieff. The implication of all these methods is the same—that the environment itself need not be altered. This explains why most radicals who became converted to psychoanalysis or glands or Gurdjieff gradually abandoned their radicalism.)

8. The idea of escape.—In Paris, in the South of France, in the South Seas or perhaps in Mexico, one can escape from all the complex restrictions of our Puritan culture. By expatriating himself, the artist will be able to express himself more freely. Failing in this attempt, he can erect his own isles of freedom in the shadow of the skyscrapers.

All these, from the standpoint of the business-Christian ethic then represented by *The Saturday Evening Post,* were corrupt ideas. This older ethic is familiar to most readers, but one feature of it has probably not been emphasized. Substantially, it was a *production* ethic. The great virtues it taught were industry, foresight, thrift, and personal initiative. The workman should be industrious in order to produce more for his employer; he should look ahead to the future; he should save money in order to become a capitalist himself; then he should exercise personal initiative and found new factories where other workmen could toil industriously, and save, and become capitalists in their turn. During the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

process many people would suffer privations: workers would sometimes live meagrely and wrack their bodies with labor; even the employers would deny themselves luxuries which they could easily purchase, choosing instead to put back the money into their business; but after all, our bodies were not to be pampered; they were temporary dwelling places, and we should be rewarded in Heaven for our self-denial. On earth, our duty was to accumulate more wealth and produce more goods, the ultimate use of which was no subject for worry. They would somehow be absorbed, by new markets opened in the West, or overseas in new countries, or by the increased purchasing power of workmen who had saved and bettered their position.

This was the ethic of a young capitalism, and it worked admirably, so long as the territory and population of the country were expanding faster than its industrial plant. But after the War, the situation changed. Our industries had grown enormously to satisfy a demand which suddenly ceased. To keep the factory wheels turning, a new domestic market had to be created. Industry and thrift were no longer adequate. There must be a new ethic which encouraged people to buy, a *consumption* ethic.

It happened that many of the Greenwich Village ideas proved useful in the altered situation. Thus, *self-expression* and *paganism* encouraged a demand for all sort of products, modern furniture, beach pajamas, cosmetics, colored bathrooms with toilet paper to match. *Living for the moment* meant buying an automobile, radio or house, using it now, and paying for it tomorrow. *Female equality* was capable of doubling the consumption of products formerly used by men alone. Even *escape* would help to stimulate business in the country from which the artist was escaping. The expatriates, against their will, were trade missionaries for fountain pens, silk stockings, portable typewriters. They drew after them an invading army of tourists, thus increasing the profits of steamship lines and travel agencies. Everything fitted into the business picture.

I don't mean to say that Greenwich Village was the cause of the revolution in morals that swept over the country in the decade before 1930, nor do I mean that big business deliberately plotted to render the nation extravagant, pleasure-worshipping and reckless of the future. The new moral standards had other sources—the excitement and uncertainty of the War itself; the automobile, the movies, the sex magazines, the new psychology, prohibition—but Greenwich Village was the first to adopt them. And business, though it laid no plots in advance, was quick enough to use the situation.

Thus, when women began smoking, the cigarette manufacturers foresaw the effect of the new custom on their volume of sales, but they hesitated to offend public opinion. The most they dared was gradually to introduce an attractive girl into their illustrations, sitting beside the handsome young man with his Camel or Chesterfield or Lucky. Then they took a further step: the girl implored the man to "blow some of the smoke my way." Then—a real sensation—came the first billboard on which the girl herself was actually smoking. By 1930, when the total production of cigarettes had more than doubled, propaganda for smoking by women was appearing even in the farm journals, against the violent protests of farm readers. Instead of merely profiting by the revolution, the manufacturers were now promoting it.

Meanwhile the moral revolution had been spreading through the country. Women east and west had bobbed their hair; they now smoked cigarettes while eating lunch in black-and-orange tea shops just like those in the Village. Houses were furnished to look like studios. Stenographers went on parties, like artists and models and dress manufacturers. The "party," conceived as a gathering together of men and women to drink gin cocktails, flirt, dance to the phonograph or radio and gossip about their absent friends, was in fact becoming one of the most popular American institutions; nobody stopped to think how short its history had been in this country. It developed out of the "orgies" celebrated by the French 1830 Romantics, but it was introduced to this country by Greenwich Villagers—before being adopted by salesmen from Kokomo and the younger country-club set in Kansas City.

Wherever one turned, the Greenwich Village ideas were making their way; even *The Saturday Evening Post* was feeling their influence. It began to wobble on prohibition. It allowed drinking, petting and unfaithfulness to be mentioned in the stories it published; its illustrations showed women smoking. Its advertising columns admitted one after another of the strictly pagan products—cosmetics, toilet tissue, cigarettes—yet still it continued to thunder against Greenwich Village and bohemian immorality. It even nourished the illusion that the long campaign had been successful: on more than one occasion it announced that the Village was dead.

Last winter its editorial page contained a sour obituary. "The sad truth is," it said, "that the Village was a flop. None of the causes for which it fought and argued and starved ever amounted to anything. The new standards which it demanded in all the arts proved false and artificial, even silly. . . ." But most of the causes for which the Villagers "fought and argued and starved" were not artistic causes. The standards they demanded were social, and their effects are to be sought in our business and social life. Perhaps the Village is moribund today, but we can't be certain: creeds and ways of life among artists are hard to kill. If it is true, however, that the Village is dying, the reasons are not those assigned in *The Post* editorial. It is dying because it became so popular that too many people insisted on living there: the results were expressed in rents too high for the pocketbooks of the indigent Villagers. It is dying because many of the younger writers and artists have adopted the hard morals of the Communists, and because the older ones, those who made the Village famous, are living in Connecticut or Vermont on what they earn by working for weekly magazines of large circulation. It is dying, finally, because women smoke cigarettes in the streets of the Bronx, drink gin cocktails in Omaha and have perfectly swell parties in Seattle and Middletown—in other words, because the whole of middle-class America has been going Greenwich Village.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

AS I LIKE IT – *William Lyon Phelps*

A LITERARY DISCOVERY

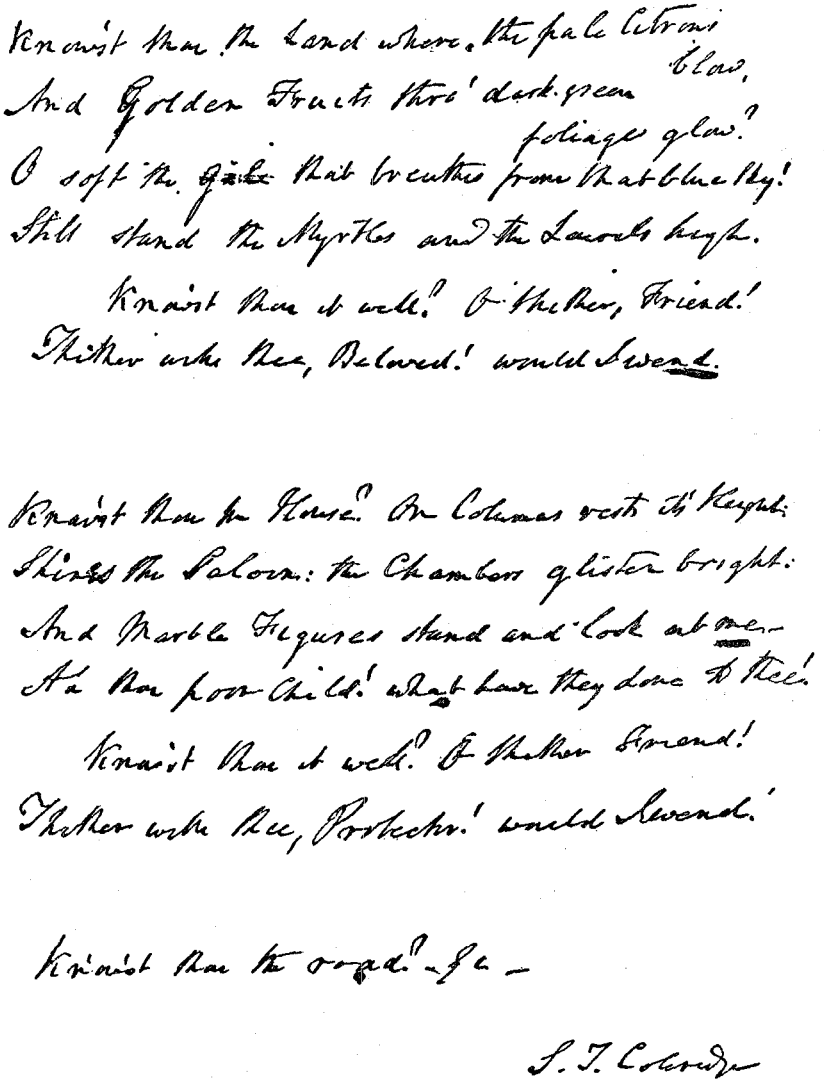
I HOPE I have not completely wearied my readers by remarks on Goethe's lyrical masterpiece, "Kennst du das Land," and in any case my justification for one more allusion is that I have made an important discovery, which I have saved up for Scribnerians; and it concerns a great English poet as well as Goethe himself. In 1834, the year of the death of Coleridge, a definitive edition of the Englishman's "Poetical Works" appeared in three volumes. This contained the first stanza of his translation of the famous lyric, "Kennst du das Land." No one has ever discovered when he wrote this, but it first appeared in print in 1834. A few weeks ago I obtained Coleridge's own *manuscript* translation, written and signed by him, and it contains *two* stanzas, instead of one. To the best of my knowledge and belief, I now print for the first time a hitherto unknown stanza by Samuel Taylor Coleridge. The editor of the standard edition of the complete poems, Ernest Hartley Coleridge (Oxford, 1912), queries the date 1799 in a note to his publication of the first stanza. Not only is this second stanza now in print for the first time, but the manuscript of the *first* is very different indeed from the standard published version, in which editors follow the edition of 1834. Here I print from manuscript which you will find reproduced in facsimile on this page:

Know'st thou the Land where the pale Citrons blow,
And Golden Fruits thro' dark-green foliage glow?
O soft the Gale that breathes from that blue Sky!
Still stand the Myrtles and the Laurels high.
Know'st thou it well? O thither, Friend!
Thither with thee, Beloved! would I wend.

Know'st thou the House? On Columns rests it's Height:
Shines the Saloon: the Chambers glisten bright:
And Marble Figures stand and look at me—
Ah thou poor Child! what have they done to thee!
Know'st thou it well? O thither, Friend!
Thither with thee, Protector! would I wend.

Know'st thou the road?—&c——

S. T. COLERIDGE.



Facsimile of the manuscript now in the possession of Doctor Phelps, containing a hitherto unknown stanza of Coleridge's translation of Goethe's famous poem. Doctor Phelps secured the manuscript in England on his recent trip abroad.

A brief and excellent new book is "Goethe the Challenger," by Alice Raphael; and it is good to see Bayard Taylor's incomparable translation of Faust in the handy form of "The World's Classics."

When Carlyle died in 1881, he had reached an apotheosis. Then came Froude's publication of the "Reminiscences," the two volumes of the "Life," and the "Letters" of Jane. The towering reputation was so badly undercut that for a time men wondered if it could remain standing. Swinburne published a sonnet named

AFTER LOOKING INTO CARLYLE'S REMINISCENCES

Three men lived yet when this dead man was young
Whose names and words endure forever: one
Whose eyes grew dim with straining toward the sun,
And his wings weakened, and his angel's tongue
Lost half the sweetest song was ever sung,
But like the strain half uttered earth hears none,
Nor shall man hear till all men's songs are done;

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

One whose clear spirit like an eagle hung
Between the mountains hallowed by his love
And the sky stainless as his soul above:
And one the sweetest heart that ever spake
The brightest words wherein sweet wisdom smiled.
These deathless names by this dead snake defiled
Bid memory spit upon him for their sake.

What was left of Carlyle's reputation after attacks of this kind received a terrible blow by the world war. Carlyle had always exalted Germany and the Strong Man; so much so that one book, which I reviewed recently in these columns held Carlyle responsible for the war!

But Genius resembles Truth—when crushed to earth, it rises again. Within the last ten years there has been an enormously growing interest in Carlyle's personality and in his books. The most complete biography of any human being that has appeared in the twentieth century is D. A. Wilson's "Life" of Carlyle, the final volume of which is eagerly expected. The accomplished scholar, Professor Waldo Dunn of Wooster, Ohio, has published a book, a new one has just appeared by Emery Neff, and it is now thought advisable to translate Professor Louis Cazamian's "Carlyle" which appeared in French in 1913.

Apart from the fact that Carlyle is one of the greatest artists and humorists in English literature, several other things may account for the recrudescence of his fame. It might be said now, that Froude, so far from injuring Carlyle, has done him lasting service. The Victorian's idea of biography was whitewash and encomium; the standard biography of Tennyson is an instance. Froude wrote like a man of 1932. Then Carlyle, who attacked democracy when democracy was triumphant, and orthodox political economy when prosperity became rampant, seems not to have been the mere common scold that his enemies called him. Today the axioms of the old political economy and the settlement of expert questions of public finance by counting noses are receiving critical attention.

Through the kindness of a Yale undergraduate, Francis Hine Low, who owns the manuscript, I am enabled to print for the first time the following characteristic letter by Thomas Carlyle. It is addressed to Mr. D. B. Brightwick, Greenwood College, Stockbridge, Hants.

"Chelsea, 1 Feb. 1859.

"Sir,

"I can give no advice or precept about the matters you write of, except this one remark: The grand secret (worth all the others together, and without which all the others are worth nothing and *less*) for inculcating and teaching virtues and graces is, that a man honestly, and with more and more of silent sincerity, *have* them himself. Lodged there in the silent deeps of his being, they will not fail to shine thro', and be not only visible but undeniable in whatever he is led to say or to do, and every hour of the day he will, consciously and unconsciously, find good means of teaching them. This is the grand indispensable requisite; this present, the rest is very certain to follow: the rest is more matter of detail, depending on speciality of circumstance, whh a man's own common sense, if he is in earnest towards his aim, will better and better instruct him in.

"The business, I am sorrowfully aware, is often enough undertaken without this indispensable prerequisite; nay in general there is a dim notion abroad that a man *can* teach such things by merely wishing to do it, and without having them himself: but the fatal result inevitably is, He teaches, can teach, nothing but hypocrisy and unblessed apery and mendacity;—and it is a kind of salvation to his poor pupils if they, in a dim way, see thro' him, and refuse to imbibe the slow-poison of such teaching.

"I fancy you to be an ingenuous young man, aiming manfully to do your best in the vocation that has fallen to you;—and I hang up, far *ahead* (I hope), this ugly but true warning upon a certain path, whh all mortals of us ought to avoid and abhor much more than we do at present.

"Wishing you heartily well, I remain (in much haste)

Yours sincerely

T. Carlyle."

Emery Neff's book "Carlyle" is a thoughtful, judicial appraisal of his life, character, and influence. Mr. Cazamian's book is more in the nature of philosophical criticism. But both are eminently readable, and all the more so, to those who, like me, have read with excitement every word of the six volumes by D. A. Wilson, and wish the line would stretch out like the progeny of Banquo.

Another genius of the nineteenth century is being freshly psychoanalyzed—Robert Browning. Whether because of the new interest in his relations with Elizabeth—the greatest love story to be found either in fact or fiction—or because his virility and courage are needed in a time of despondency—certain it is that books about him are multiplying. The ideal way to examine his writings was shown by Professor William Clyde DeVane in his scholarly work on the "Parleyings." In 1931 appeared "Browning—Background and Conflict," by F. R. G. Duckworth of Liverpool; in 1932 "Browning and the Twentieth Century," by Doctor A. Allen Brockington of London. A volume of unpublished letters will soon appear, edited by Professor Thurman Losson Hood, of Trinity College, Hartford; while Professor Armstrong of Baylor University, Waco, Texas, is constantly unearthing new and important material. Browning has always been more popular in the United States than in England.

Doctor Brockington's book has some interesting facts, one of which he connects with Browning's optimism, and the other with his mysticism. These I shall quote here, "for the strengthening of hearts."

"My son, Lieut. Conrad Clive Brockington of the 2d Welsh Regiment, fell in the First Battle of the Somme at the age of 18. I met him on the Albert-Amiens road less than a month before he was killed, and we had a talk. An Exeter lady had sent him a copy of *Shakespeare*, and he had been reading it.

"'I think,' he said, 'the tragedy is a mistake.'

"'A mistake?'

"'Yes,' he said, 'there is no tragedy in life.'

"He had just come through the sharpest phase of what was, up to then, the greatest battle of the War. His closest friend had been killed by a 'pip-squeak' in the face. And yet he said, calmly and without defence or explanation, as if the conclusion were self-evident to him and did not admit of question or argument: 'There is no tragedy in life.'"

The second:

"In the summer of 1916 I was in a place called Y wood, and one evening

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I saw a shell burst on a shallow dug-out, about a hundred yards away from me. I ran to the dug-out. The mess servants of a battery had been having tea in it, and after tea they had been playing cards. When I looked at the ruin, all I could recognize of humanity was one grey face. And I thought: 'Now I *know* that there is a Resurrection of the dead.' The sudden conviction was forced upon me. It seemed, at the time, to have nothing to do with the logical faculty. It was apparently against reason. For what could be less like life than that ruin? But the conviction was irrefragable."

In reading various books about Browning, I often notice a doubt in the critic's mind as to whether Browning was or was not a Christian. Well, if he was not a Christian, then there never was one.

Thomas Edward Lawrence, who published in 1927 the amazing book "Revolt in the Desert," and in the same year changed his name to Thomas Edward Shaw, has just produced a prose translation of Homer's "Odyssey." Mr. Shaw is a soldier and a scholar. He was Research Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford, was a Senior Demy at Magdalen, where he took his B.A. in 1911, was Assistant in the British Museum's excavation of Carchemish on the Euphrates; and his work in the war is too well known to mention. He was an intimate friend of Thomas Hardy, who had the highest admiration for his mind and character. The publishers have made a beautiful book of this new translation of Homer; it would make an admirable Christmas present. In a prefatory note Mr. Shaw calls it the twenty-eighth English rendering. The best prose translation I have read is Butcher and Lang's; that by Professor Palmer, while of course excellent in many ways, has always seemed to me a little self-conscious. The great advantage of reading the translation in the Loeb Library, is that one has the Greek on the opposite page, and can constantly refer to that. Mr. Shaw's prefatory remarks are as one might expect, salty; he has made a masculine translation. As Homer is eternally interesting, it is well to read him in different versions. Mr. Shaw does not think much of Homer's powers of characterization; it is the story he loves: "only the central family stands out, consistently and pitilessly drawn—the sly cattish wife, that cold-blooded egotist Odysseus, and the priggish son who yet met his master-prig in Menelaus. It is sorrowful to believe that these were really Homer's heroes and exemplars."

I wonder if Mr. Shaw is as pro-Troy as I am. The real hero of Homer is of course Hector, who would be popular today among English gentlemen. . . . Although the heroic age was in some ways a barbaric age, I have often wondered at the almost complete absence of physical torture. The only instance I can think of at this moment in either the "Iliad" or "Odyssey" is at the end of the twenty-second book of the "Odyssey," where the revolting torture of Melanthius is described in two sentences.

Another fine gift book for Christmas is "The Trial of Jeanne d'Arc," a tall volume, containing the complete English translation of the whole court record. It seems strange that the second most famous woman in all history should have had to wait five hundred years for her testimony to be printed in English. This is a verbatim report and is more exciting to read than most intentionally dramatic presentations.

The return of the native is happily seen in T. S. Eliot's appointment at Harvard as lecturer for the present academic year. As a literary critic, he has no living superior in America; and I advise colleges and clubs to secure his oral services. His return to America is signalized by three works, two by himself. "John Dryden, the Poet, the Dramatist, the Critic, Three Essays," which I have read with delight, "Selected Essays," containing thirty-three articles, ranging from Euripides to Irving Babbitt, and a curious French work, printed in English in France, by Louis Grudin, called "Mr. Eliot Among the Nightingales," which is now available in America. I have read this book through from beginning to end and haven't the remotest idea what the author is talking about; therefore, it must be important.

Pearl S. Buck, who found and earned both fame and popularity by "The Good Earth," has followed that remarkable book with "Sons," a novel that will add to her high reputation. The same qualities that gave to "The Good Earth" its epic quality and its profound significance, are equally characteristic of "Sons." The Flaubertian objectivity and aloofness of these two works of art impress me more and more; and if it were not for her short novel, "The Young Revolutionist," it would be impossible even to make a conjecture as to her own philosophy and point of view. Therefore I advise her million admirers to read "The Young Revolutionist."

If Pearl S. Buck writes one more novel maintaining the high standard she has set for herself, she will make my list of seven leading living American woman novelists eight. Here they are in the blessed alphabetical order:

Dorothy Canfield, because of "The Bent Twig" and "Her Son's Wife."
Willa Cather, because of "The Professor's House," "Death Comes for the Archbishop," and "Obscure Destinies."
Edna Ferber, because of "So Big," and "Show Boat."
Zona Gale, because of "Miss Lulu Bett," and "Birth."
Ellen Glasgow, because she has surpassed all her previous work in "The Sheltered Life."
Anne Sedgwick, because of "The Encounter," "The Little French Girl," and "A Fountain Sealed."
Edith Wharton, because of "The Age of Innocence," "Ethan Frome," and "The Children."

I wonder why it is that "prize novels," by which I mean novels selected by distinguished judges from competitive manuscripts, are so often undistinguished. "Peking Picnic" is quite unimportant. Sophistication, like patriotism, is not enough.

On the other hand, a first novel by Lillian Gill, called "A Family Affair," is both charming and brilliant, although this is the only notice I have seen of it.

The much-praised novel, "Inheritance," by Phyllis Bentley, seems to me competent work—nothing more. It is conspicuously lacking in the vitality of "The Forsyte Saga."

Two excellent books on Edwin Booth have appeared this year, and they are so different one should read them both. The first is a rhapsody, filled with superlatives from beginning to end—"Behind the Scenes with Edwin Booth," by Katherine Goodale, who was a young actress in his touring company.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Her attitude is adoration, but somehow a clear and definite picture of the hero appears. The other book is a biography and judicial appraisal; it is called "Darling of Misfortune," and is written by the able drama critic of *The New York Sun,* Richard Lockridge. How many know that 1933 is the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of America's foremost tragedian? Mr. Lockridge's work is full of thoughtful questions: *how great was Edwin Booth?* In the latter years of his career, the answer to that question would depend upon just how the actor was feeling on the particular night when you happened to be present. I saw him in "Hamlet" in 1887, and he walked through the part mechanically. Not for one moment did he justify his reputation. On the next day I saw him as Shylock, and he was inspired. In the same rôle I have seen Richard Mansfield, Ernst von Possart, Walter Hampden, David Warfield, George Arliss, Otis Skinner, Henry Irving, and many others; there is no comparison. In this part and on that night Edwin Booth was so superior to any and all of these as to be in a class by himself.

Gene Tunney's autobiography, "A Man Must Fight," deals only with his career as a boxer. I found it interesting from first to last; and it is a lesson in perseverance, concentration, and attention to detail.

Adrian Bell, who in "Silver Lea" wrote the best novel of farming life that I have ever read, equals it in his latest story, "The Cherry Tree." It is absolutely satisfying.

Two good murder thrillers are "The Flying Beast," by Walter Masterman, and "Rope to Spare," by Philip MacDonald.

As many of my readers are interested in a "ready and easy way" to acquire a foreign language, I take pleasure in printing a letter from Miss Rose Cettel, of Norwood, Ohio.

"Schliemann did not invent his method, but used simply a method recommended by the illustrious philosopher Locke, an Englishman who lived a few centuries earlier than Schliemann. . . . He proceeded thus: First he acquired a vocabulary by reading the foreign text with an interlinear translation. Then he memorized the auxiliary verbs of a language and then the paradigms of the the verbs proper. Then of course, also the numerals, the adverbs, and then he tried to read without a translation and always translated from the foreign language into his German. Thus he acquired in due time a working knowledge not only of the language as such, but also memorized automatically the idiomatic expressions and phrases. One year is enough to acquire thus, by due application, a good enough and thorough knowledge of the language and the free use of it, even in conversation. For the latter purpose, however, the pronunciation of such foreign languages as *e.g.,* the Slavic (Russian, Polish, Bohemian, etc.) or the French (and in the case of other nationalities, that of English) a foreign-born educated person is necessary, as to correct the naturally faulty pronunciation of the scholar. I know from my own experience, that the foreigner, by learning a language different from his own, is always overanxious to get the 'Parisian' pronunciation of the French, or the 'English' *i.e.,* London pronunciation of the English language. To tell the truth, he should not bother much about the pronunciation, because he will never attain in this respect the perfection of the native individual, and if the pronunciation of the strange language is fairly correct, it's enough. Very few of us mortals have such a keen ear as to perceive the nuances of the pronunciation of a foreign idiom, however we can acquire a thorough knowledge of the language as such. . . .

". . . I used and use still the method of Schliemann, a method about which I heard thirty years ago."

From E. Vasilievitch, written on a train in Canada:

"During many years and in many lands my progress in English has been aided by 'As I Like It.' . . . I pay respectful homage to your dicta. Please tell me if I am justified in my deep aversion to the following—to me—perversions: 1. 'Relation' for 'Relative.' Is not my fat aunt my 'relative' rather than my 'relation'? She is indeed no abstraction! 2. 'Check' for 'Cheque.' Surely the rare scrap of paper which too seldom brings me money is no 'check.' It never seems so to me. 3. 'Putties' for 'Puttees.' When delightful Mrs. Rinehart with the *Satevepost* as her accomplice, makes her heroes—or her heroines—appear in shining 'putties,' is she perhaps affording sly publicity to the Guild of Glaciers?"

These are interesting points. Fowler makes both relation and relative correct through good usage. Both are right. Cheque is English, check American. The English say check for hatcheck, etc., but I think make a desirable change in spelling to mark a distinction. I always write "cheque" except where I know it will not be understood; I also write "storey" when I am talking about a building and "kerb" for the trimming of the pavement. Our language is so sloppy that every opportunity for precision should be taken.

Until I got this letter, I had never seen the spelling "puttie." Fowler apparently never heard of it, but Wyld (1932) gives it as a secondary spelling. It came probably from the pronunciation; the word is correctly accented on the first syllable.

The accomplished British journalist and public speaker, S. K. Ratcliffe, comments on some of my remarks on the English language as spoken in England and in America.

"Like I do: *i.e.,* like as a conjunctive adverb, is just as universal on your side of the ocean as on ours. I admit that our so-called educated people, and our novelists, use it abominably; and I know eminent public teachers who can't avoid it. But it's American all right.

"EXPECT. This is curious. You say we use it in place of think, imagine, opine, and what not. No doubt, to a large extent this is so. I notice for instance that in Frank Swinnerton's latest novel, 'The Georgian House,' the women use it where I should not. But here is the interesting point. Dickens, Mrs. Trollope, and other English travellers in the United States a hundred years ago and less made the word expect very prominent in their reporting, or imitating, of American speech. Turn them up and you will see how marked it is. Now, what is the explanation? That expect was less usual then in English colloquial speech than it is today? That, while Americans were already given in some regions to reckoning or calculating, they did not at that time guess?

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Nowadays we English suppose, imagine, think, believe—and as you say, expect. You Americans still guess to a most notable extent. If I say to an American acquaintance, in almost any part of the U. S., 'You are going to reelect Hoover?' I should be surprised if he did not reply, 'I guess so,' or 'I guess not,' as the case may be. But Dickens would have made him expect in this case and a hundred others.

" 'In almost every good thing, except music, the English lead.' Yes, I've noticed it: in the drama, in architecture, in railway stations; in transport, cooking, domestic comfort, and the civilized use of running water; in sanitation, local government, and all interiors, public and domestic; in tea, coffee, and cold drinks; in coinage, hotels, and baggage checking; in apples, asparagus, and celery; in clubs, libraries, and community organization! And in the establishment of a high standard of written and spoken language. In cafés, holiday camps, and bathing beaches. My hat, yes!

"Looks at. H. G. Wells was much earlier than the Americans you cite, with 'An Englishman Looks at the World.'

"Going places. As you know, the Scotch and Irish habitually say Some place where we always say Somewhere. Some place sounds very queer in England. Going places, I suggest, is a natural development from the American acceptance of the Scotch and Irish usage."

I do not believe that "like I do" is American; and I feel sure that a larger proportion of cultivated English people use it than Americans.

"Expect" today is certainly commoner in England than in America. As for "guess," the *locus classicus* is of course in Wordsworth:

> "He was a lovely youth! I guess
> The panther in the wilderness
> Was not so fair as he."

Today whenever an English writer wishes to make an American character seem American, he makes him say "guess" continuously, and it is true we use it often; but in response to Mr. Ratcliffe's question, if the American were cultivated, I do not believe he would answer with "guess."

As to the English leading in almost every good thing, I was referring of course to spiritual things, not to creature comforts. In the drama, they most certainly lead. No other country in the world today has any group of playwrights that will compare with Barrie, Shaw, Galsworthy, Ervine, Yeats, Barker; as for coffee and central heating, the English lead at the wrong end.

Ernest Spofford, the librarian of The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, has kindly supplied the following information on the word Conestoga.

"Conestoga Creek received its name from the Indian tribe of that name. The excellence of the wagons made in the valley of this Creek (Conestoga) made the name famous, and the wagons became known as Conestoga Wagons. I would refer you to pages 15 to 19 of 'Conestoga Six Horse Bell Teams of Eastern Pennsylvania,' by John Omwake, and published by the Ebbert and Richardson Company of Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1932. I may also refer you to SCRIBNER'S MAGAZINE of August, 1888, and the *National Geographic Magazine,* November, 1923."

The Faerie Queene Club acquires a distinguished member in William C. White, the author of two interesting books on Russia. He writes, "I read the thing (that common noun is used purposely)—during Bicker week at Princeton!"

I am glad also to add the name of Pauline Aiken, a graduate of the University of Maine.

A paragraph in a New England newspaper, informs me (and perhaps Mr. Markham) for the first time of a new honor.

MRS. BYARD WINS POULTRY AWARD

"Dorothy Randolph Byard of Norwalk and Grace Hoffman White of Westport were awarded honorable mention in the 18th International Poultry Contest held under the auspices of the American Section of the Poultry Society of Great Britain, it was announced yesterday by Mrs. Alice Hunt Bartlett, chairman of the Premium Committee. There were several thousand entries.

"Judges for the contest were: Mrs. Bartlett, Dr. W. Lyons Prelps (sic) of Yale University, Edward Markham, famous American poet and several other outstanding poets of America and Great Britain."

This must have been, in Chaucerian language, a Parlement of Foules. And after all the distinction between some poetry and poultry is paltry.

LAST-MINUTE SUGGESTIONS FOR CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR'S GIFTS

"The March of Democracy," by James Truslow Adams. Scribners. $3.50.
"Lost Lectures," by Maurice Baring. Knopf. $3.
"Farewell Miss Julie Logan," by J. M. Barrie. Scribners. $1.
"The Cherry Tree," by Adrian Bell. Dodd, Mead. $2.
"Rip Tide," by W. R. Benet. Duffield and Green. $2.50.
"Journal," by Arnold Bennett. Two volumes. Viking. $4 each.
"Sons," by Pearl Buck. John Day. $2.50.
"What We Live By," by Abbe Dimnet. Simon and Schuster. $2.50.
"Life and Lillian Gish," by Lillian Gish and A. B. Paine. Macmillan. $5.
"Flowering Wilderness," by John Galsworthy. Scribners. $2.50.
"Darling of Misfortune," by R. Lockridge. Century. $3.50.
"I Cover the Waterfront," by Max Miller. Dutton. $2.
Translation of Homer's "Odyssey," T. E. Shaw. Oxford. $3.50.
"Our Times: 1909–1914," by Mark Sullivan. Scribners. $3.75.

BOOKS MENTIONED IN THIS ARTICLE

Bayard Taylor's Translation of "Faust." Oxford. 80 cents.
"Goethe the Challenger," by Alice Raphael. Jonathan Cape & Robert Ballou. $1.50.
"Carlyle," by Emery Neff. Norton. $3.
"Carlyle," by Louis Cazamian. Macmillan. $2.75.
"Browning and the Twentieth Century," by Dr. A. A. Brockington. Oxford. $4.
"The Trial of Jeanne d'Arc." Gotham House. $4.
"John Dryden, the Poet, the Dramatist, the Critic, Three Essays," by T. S. Eliot. Terrance and Elsa Holliday. $1.50.
"Selected Essays," by T. S. Eliot. Harcourt, Brace. $3.50.
"Mr. Eliot Among the Nightingales," by Louis Grudin. Covici Friede. $1.
"The Young Revolutionist," by Pearl Buck. John Day. $1.
"A Man Must Fight," by Gene Tunney. Houghton, Mifflin. $2.50.
"Peking Picnic," by Ann Bridge. Little, Brown. $2.
"A Family Affair," by Lillian Gill. Macaulay. $2.
"Inheritance," by Phyllis Bentley. Macmillan. $2.50.
"Behind the Scenes with Edwin Booth," by Katherine Goodale. Houghton, Mifflin. $2.50.
"The Flying Beast," by Walter Masterman. Dutton. $2.
"Rope to Spare," by Philip MacDonald. Doubleday, Doran. $2.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED